CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.20 SEPTEMBER 1985
95p



RED MOON
Another Smash from Level 9

MONTY ON THE RUN
Gremlin

POPEYE
Dk Tronics

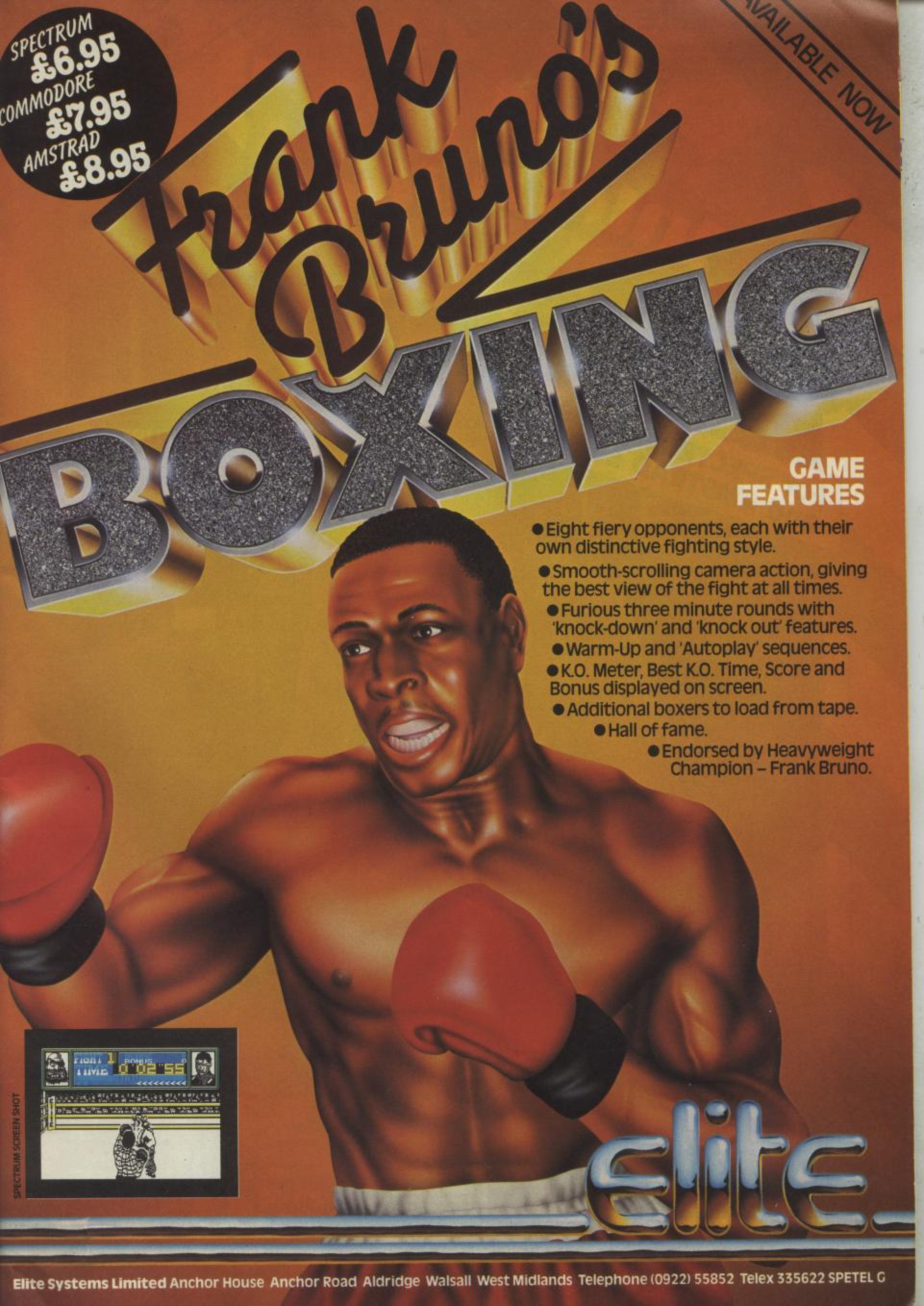
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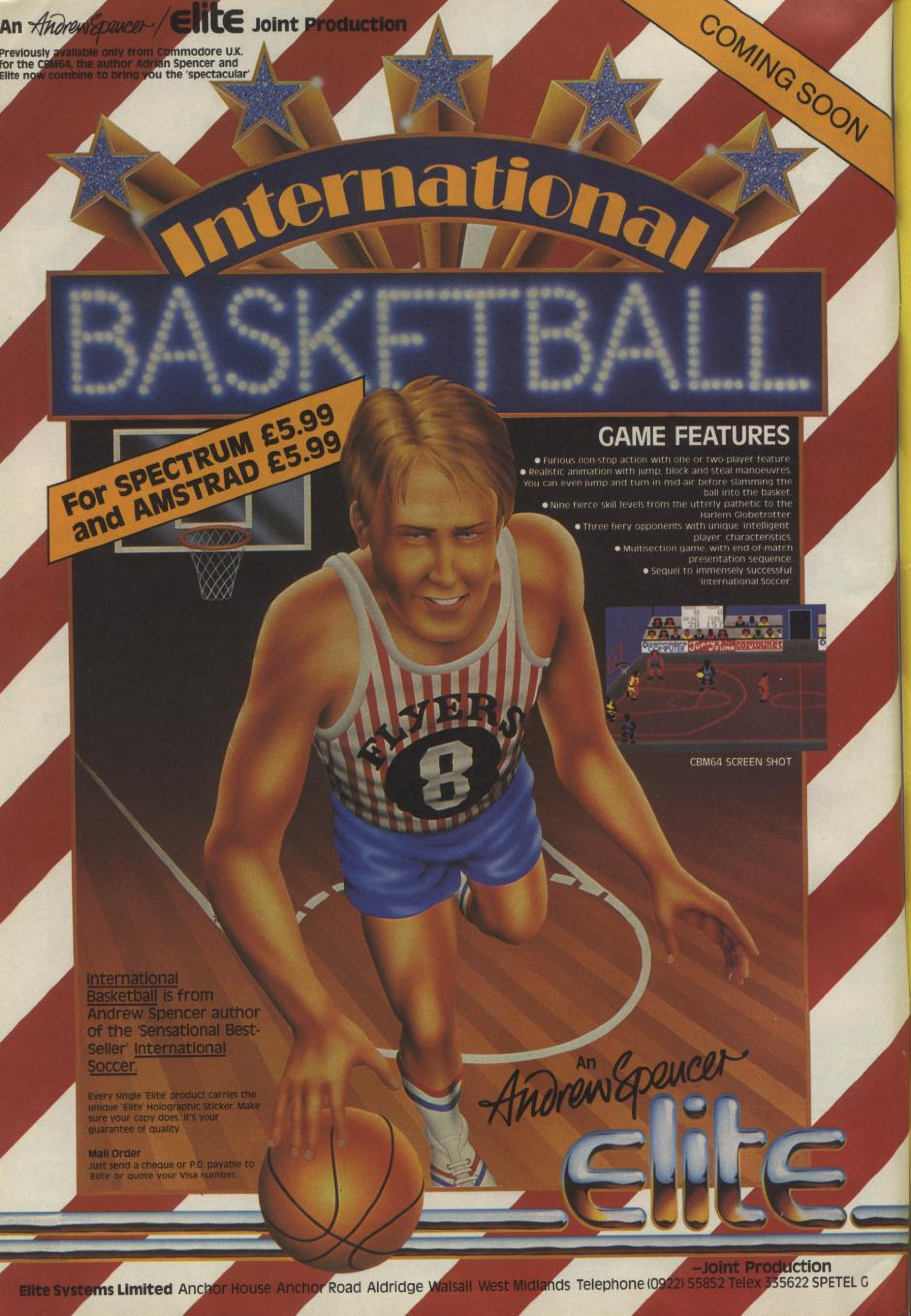
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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE No.20 SEPTEMBER 1985

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D.I.Y

The October CRASH hits the streets on 26th September. Wait for it, wait for it . .

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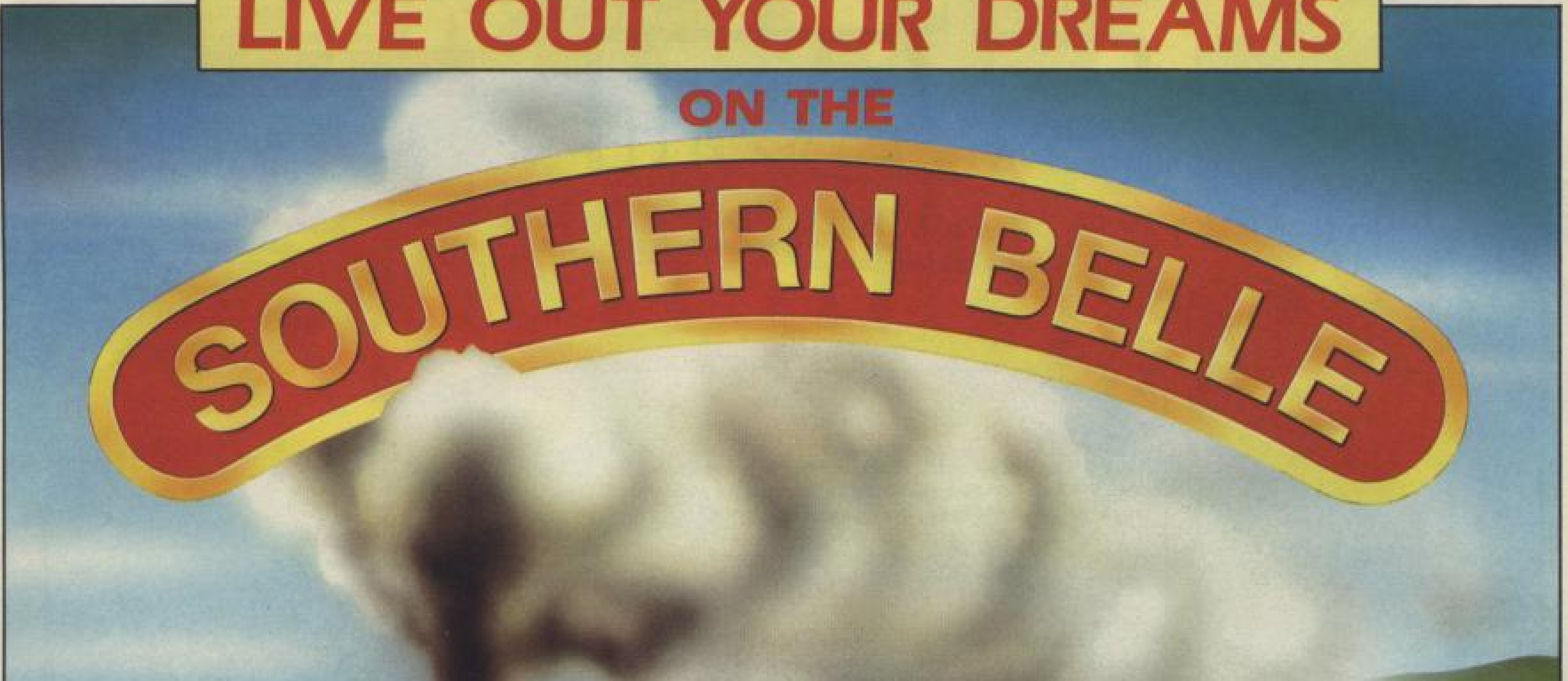
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Cover by Oliver Frey

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MICRO GAMES ACTION

PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

We apologise to any readers who may have had difficulty in obtaining a copy of last month's CRASH (August, issue 19) from their newsagent. Two days before the official 'on sale' date, EMAP Business & Computer Publications gained an injunction to prevent distribution of the issue on grounds that there was a breach of Sinclair User magazine's copyright in four pages of the CRASH August issue. The pages were 123 to 126. Newsfield Publications was forced to comply with the injunction and recall all unsold copies from the retailers in order to have the four offending pages removed before redistribution could take place. This was duly done, but in the process it was inevitable that some copies should be lost and the issue go on re-sale late.

We hope the inconvenience caused has not been too severe, but in any event, if you failed to get hold of a copy of the August issue, we have plenty of ready trimmed copies to send out and they may be obtained by using the coupon which appears on page 111 of this issue.



PONDERING PANDORA AND OTHER 128K CONUNDRUMS

Sitting in Ludlow, waiting for summer and gathering stamina for the forthcoming Personal Computer World Show, we receive news of the launch of new machines almost daily. Word also reaches us about a bit of a squabble going on inside . Sinclair Towers . . . to do with the launch of a new 128K computer.

A little while ago, Commodore started the 128K ball rolling with their machine, which is capable of pretending it's a sheep in wolf's clothing and emulating the C64. Imaginatively named the C128, it allows you to run any piece of C64 software so long as you haven't pressed the switch that turns it into a completely different, 128K beast. And Amstrad, having launched the 128K CPC 6128 in the States, are bringing it to these shores very soon. So soon, indeed, that some retailers are currently holding stocks under-the-counter, and are awaiting the go ahead so they can start selling them.

With the glut of 64K chips, the existence of established techniques to page memory (*see News Input, July Issue*) and the news of Commodore and Amstrad's moves, it came as no surprise to hear that Sinclair are planning to launch a 128K machine.

The new machine is code-named **The Derby**, according to a report in *CTW*, the trade paper read by anyone who is (or wants to be) anyone in the industry. And thus began the race to speculate as to what form the Derby will take, and whether or not it will be launched at the PCW Show this September.

With 128K machines apparently popping up all over the place, a little war is being fought between the technical chaps and the marketing fellows at Sinclair, it seems. Last time a similar dispute took place, Marketing won, and the QL came out a few weeks before the Mackintosh. And we all know the problems **that** caused Sinclair. Marketing might win this dispute, but it's unlikely they will, so don't expect to see a new machine from Sinclair at the PCW Show. (But don't stay away — we'll all be there!)

But what of the Sinclair 128K machine? Supposedly it is to be a Spectrum Plus Plus, with a sound chip, the extra memory and a price tag under £200, as well as software compatibility with the Spectrum. In putting together such a package, Sinclair have to trade off three factors: price, software compatibility and the desire to produce a better and more powerful computer.

Software compatibility has to be an important feature, with the massive Spectrum software base that exists. So far there hasn't been a single change to the Spectrum ROM — a very important fact to software developers — and there are potential problems with adding new features to the basic machine in order to produce a 128K, Plus Plus.

Software incompatibilities between the 128K machine and the Spectrum could be dealt with using the Commodore approach, hiding a Spectrum emulator inside a completely different machine — but the cheapest Spectrum emulator is . . . a Spectrum, and building onto the basic module is the cheapest way of producing a new machine.

The addition of a proper keyboard is a virtual certainty — and not before time. However the Spectrum and its ROM have been designed around 40 keys, grouped in five rows and eight columns. Changes to the keyboard may mean changes to the ROM, with attendant incompatibilities with existing software. Similarly, the addition of a sound chip — another vital step forward — means that some way has to be found to address this extra hardware. If the BASIC is altered, then software compatibility problems creep in again.

Other goodies, such as a monitor output, and maybe an RGB socket could be included in the new machine. The only reason the Spectrum doesn't have a monitor output is because there isn't an appropriate hole in the case, so a monitor output wouldn't be a total surprise on the new machine. RGB could also be supplied, although an add-on chip would be needed.

A joystick port is more essential, but don't be surprised if it's based on Interface 2. Interface 1 could well be an integral part of the computer as well. If Sinclair installs the interface as part of the manufacturing process, then economies of scale would apply and the cost would be acceptably low.

And the Spectrum's potential for networking is very good indeed; schools like to be able to network their computers, and the educational market is up for grabs again. . . .

Who knows, there might just be lots of Sinclair computers in schools before long.

ACTIVITIES BECOME ILLEGAL

The amendment to the Copyright Act, which brings computer software in line with other works which are protected by copyright has already been passed. Illegal copying, and in some circumstances unauthorised use of computer software will become a criminal offence, punishable by fines or imprisonment when the amendment to the Act comes into full force in the middle of September.

While it will still remain perfectly legal to make back-up copies of programs for your own use, selling, or possessing pirate software by way of trade become a criminal offence, punishable by the courts. Police and Trading Standards officers will be involved in the enforcement of the software copyright legislation and the Federation Against Software Theft (FAST) has appointed Bob Hay, a former Chief Superintendent to act as Enforcement Co-ordinator. FAST is an independent body, which will not initiate prosecutions but will assist its members and the authorities to bring successful prosecutions. Expect a flurry of legal activity as soon as the penalties become law.

Without doubt, there's something of a double standard associated with software piracy, or 'softlifting'. Walk into a shop and steal something, and society will condemn you for theft. Copy a program from a friend's collection and it is unlikely that society's disapproval will come crashing down upon your head. But the damage done to the owner of the intellectual property you have just acquired without payment is no less tangible.

Partly as a result of piracy, software houses are not achieving the level of sales they were a few years ago on each title they launch. Educational software is disappearing because it was pirated so much — sadly, by teachers. Many companies have found that it is uneconomic to produce educational programs, and have left the market. The same could happen to games software, although not in the very near future.

Quite what effect the new laws will have on software libraries which hire out tapes against the express wishes of the publishers is not yet clear. But if it can be used to prevent people hiring out games for £1.50 overnight and offering a tape copying program for sale to their customers, then the people who have put time and effort into producing games software won't get ripped off quite so much. Nor will the starving in Ethiopia — one such library included *Soft Aid* in its list.

Unlike people who make films, which then get offered for hire by video libraries, software companies prefer to sell their programs — you don't play a game just once, and the comparison with video libraries cannot be made directly. Authorised hiring or lending is fine. Unauthorised library activity is not, and violates people's rights to what is ultimately their own (intellectual) property.

While the full ramifications and effects of the new legislation have yet to be seen, it is unlikely that the new laws will be used to hit young people who make a couple of copies of the latest game to swop with their friends — a policeman in every playground is just not viable. But it **will** be used against people who make copies for sale. Piracy for profit will result in prosecutions, and that's no bad thing.

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

PROGRAMS REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

OLI the Foal Update: he's halfway to his first year. Does this mean he's a half-yearling? He's still real cute, though, no matter how old he is.

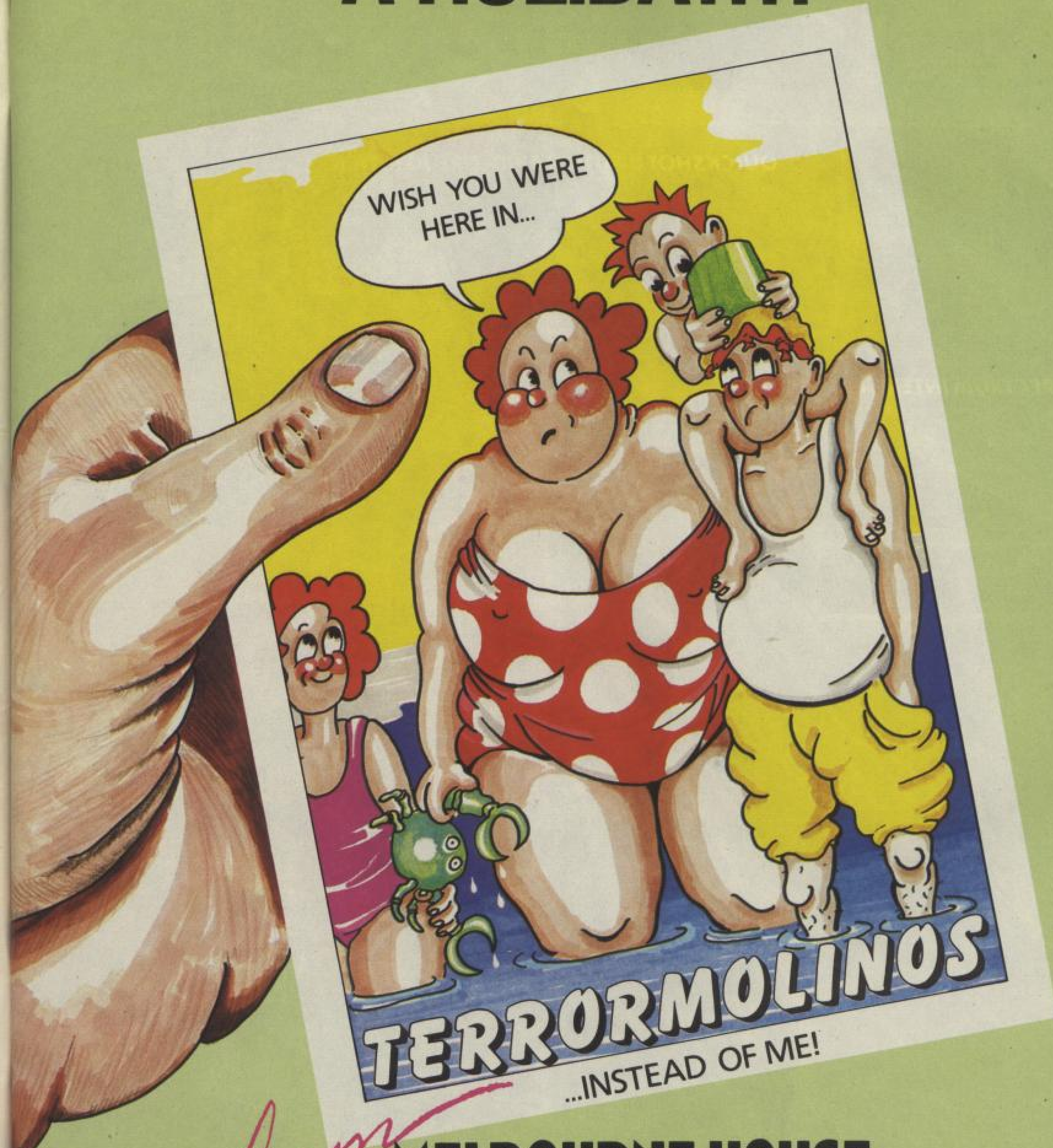


Oli still gets on well with his Mum, Parsley, as you can see from this tender domestic scene. What knobbly knees the lad has!



EEK! GASP!
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THE DELIBERATE-?!-
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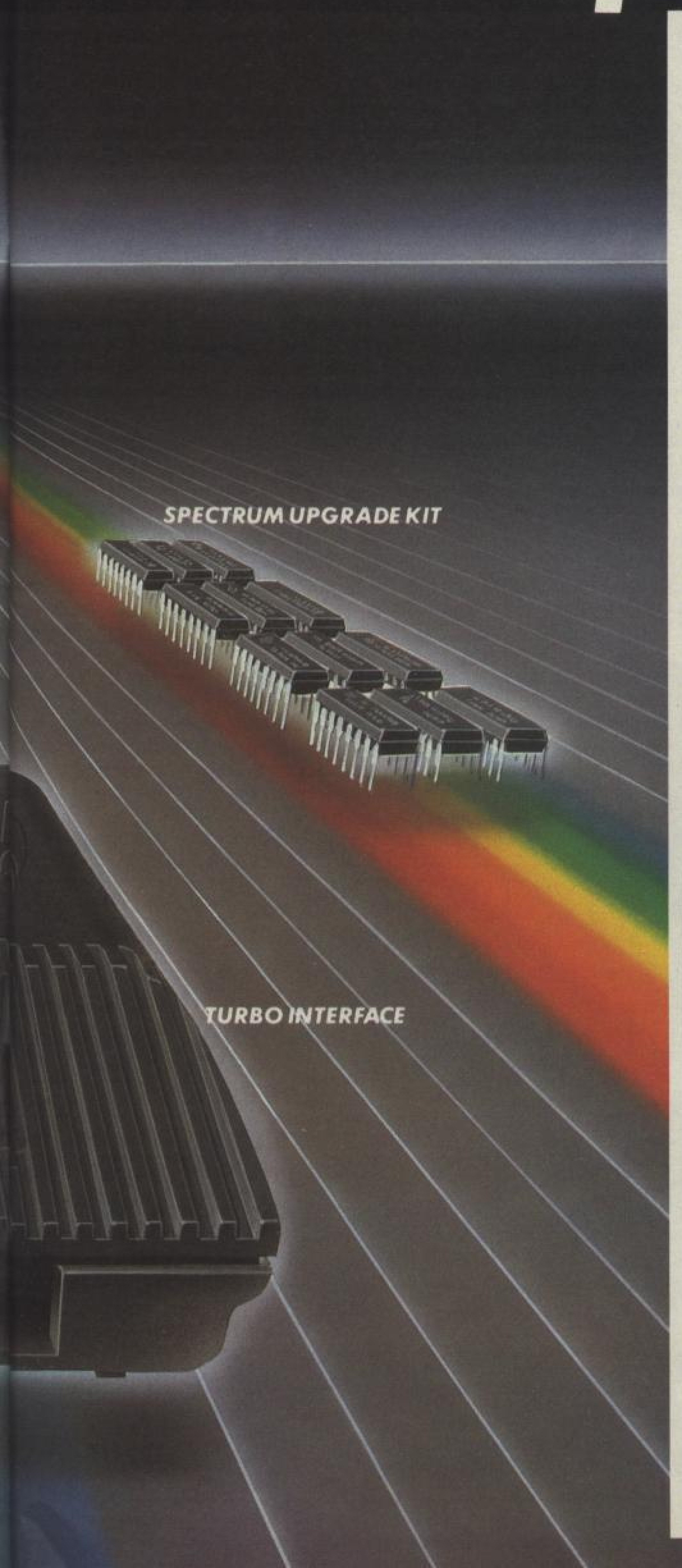
(BBC/Electron version does not feature graphics).

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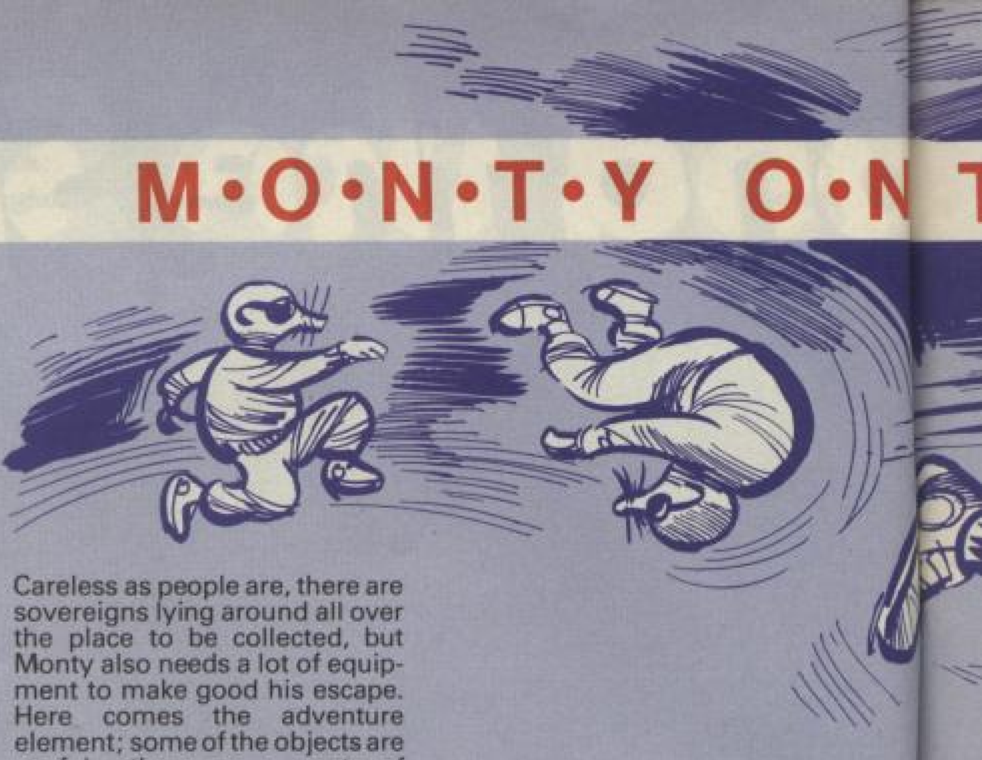
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M·O·N·T·Y O·N





MONTY ON THE RUN

Producer: Gremlin Graphics
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Peter Harrap**

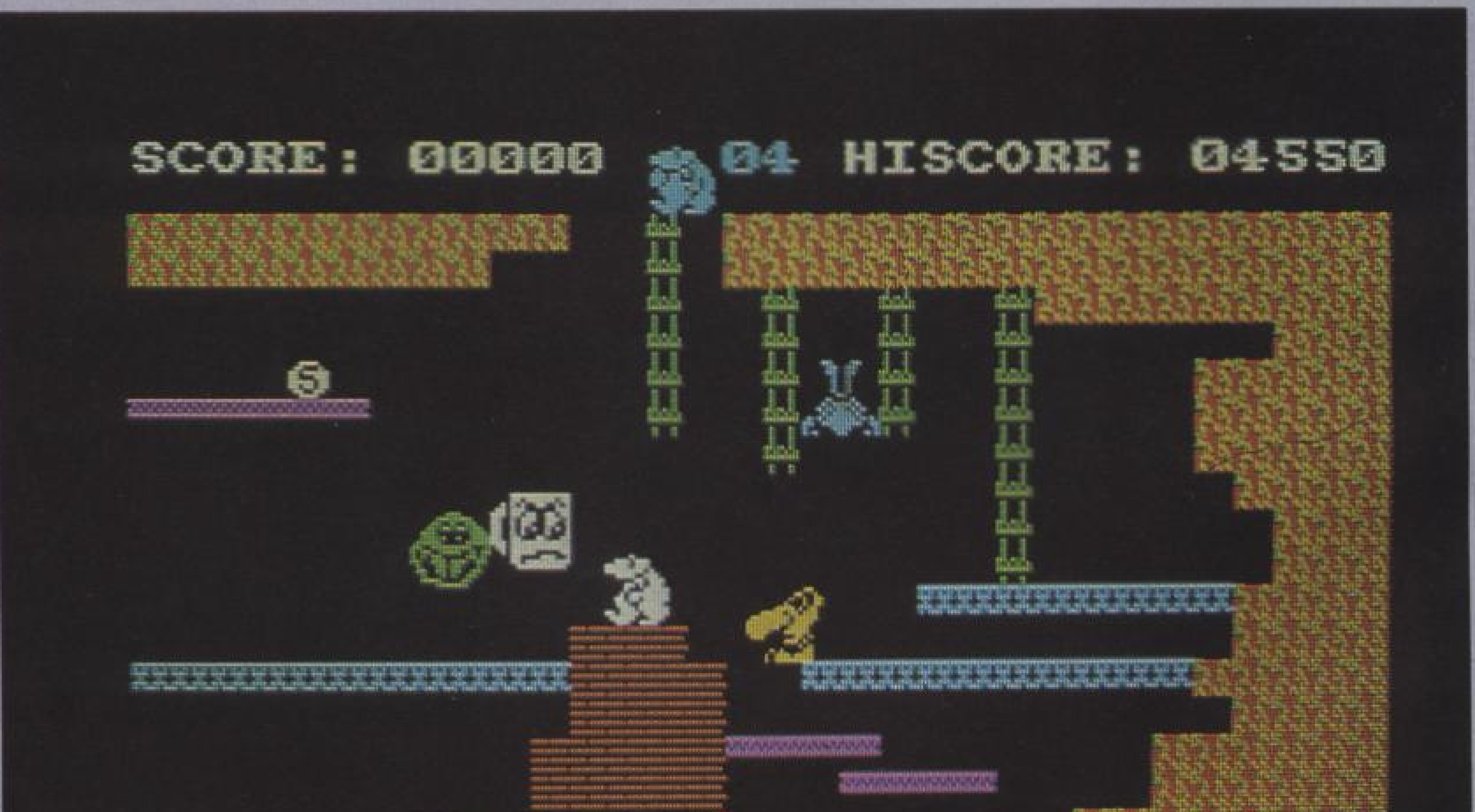
At last, the true successor to *Wanted: Monty Mole*, and Peter Harrap's evil sense of games humour is back at work. Whatever was mean in the first game, is now ten times so in this saga of prison escape for the hero mole. One noticable difference between the two games is that after his exertions in the prison gymnasium, Monty is now a very fit mole indeed and does all his jumping by somersaulting.

Graphically, the follow up is quite similar and there are the familiar combinations of platforms, building blocks, ropes and ladders. The Gremlin crushers are back as well, but some of them have an 'appalling' sense of timing. Added features are the teleport devices and the lifts. There are several of teleporters that fire beams of changing colours, and you have to work out which colour is the safe one that lets you walk through untransported. Of course, you may want to be teleported somewhere else on occasion, but not all exit points are desirable or safe! The 'safe' colour is different for each teleporter, and to make life worse, some of them change their colour after use. The lifts appear to offer a quick and useful means of going up or down, but one or two of them should be watched a bit closely because the cables aren't all that sound.

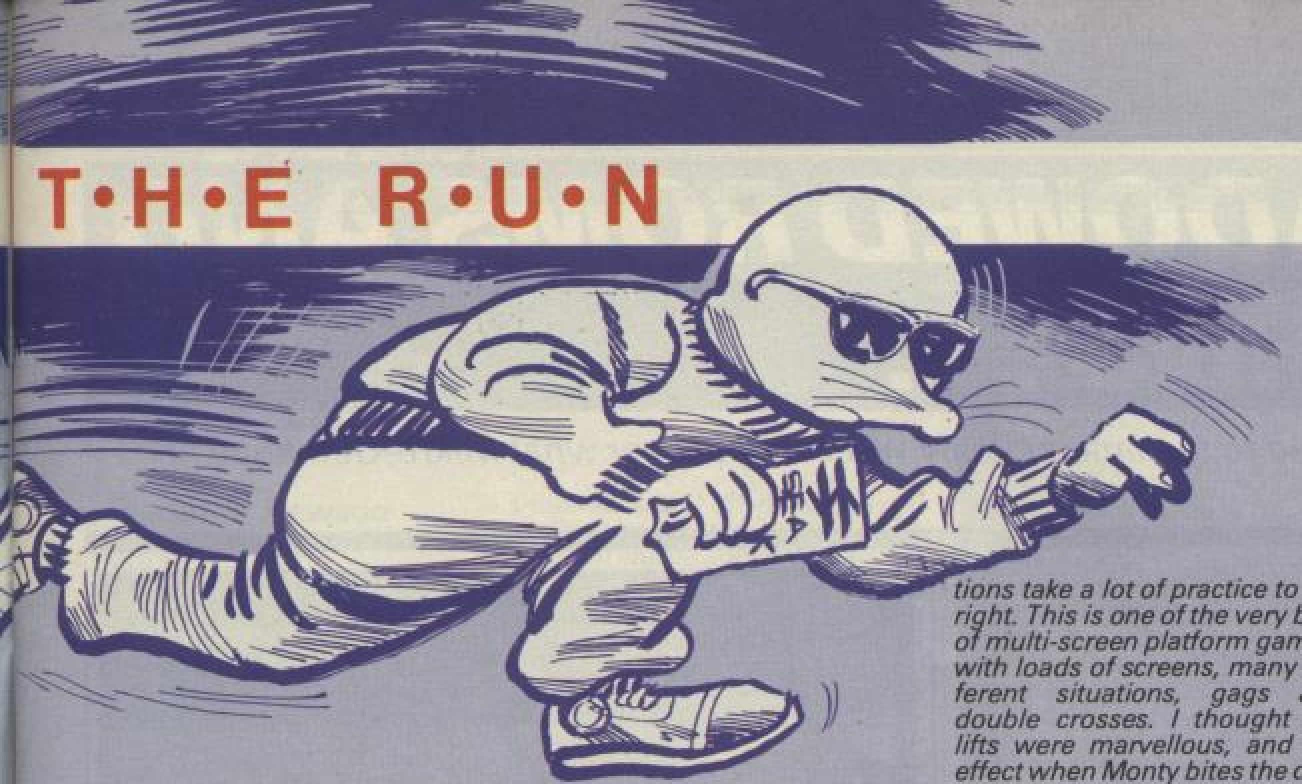
The basic object is to get Monty on board a boat sailing for France and away from the long arm of the British Law. Careless as people are, there are sovereigns lying around all over the place to be collected, but Monty also needs a lot of equipment to make good his escape. Here comes the adventure element; some of the objects are useful, others are a waste of time, and some are deadly if touched, although a number of the nastier items become less so if something else relevant has been collected earlier. This of course means having to retrace your precariously achieved steps a few times. In addition to the collectible items in the game itself, before you start the game, you may choose up to five of 21 objects which you think might help you in your quest — of course, you may choose badly, but you'll never know until its too late. . . . The game starts off outside a house, but the ship isn't too far away, and it won't be sailing until all the correct items have been collected and safely stowed away at the bow and the engines prepared for sailing.

Monty on the Run is vastly bigger and more complex than *Wanted: Monty Mole* and contains many more inter-related elements which make it both a platform jumping game and one of skilled timing with adventure overtones. Also, it is only being released in October, so this is a very early review — but one that has been fully made from a completed production copy.

CRITICISM



T·H·E R·U·N



● 'What a brilliant game. I have never played *Monty Mole* and I am beginning to realise what I missed and why it was so popular. There are hundreds of screens gradually getting more difficult with progression. Every screen is as detailed as the last. There is a good idea on the beginning where Monty (you) can choose 5 tools to help him in the task. Choosing the wrong tools can be fatal. This idea, for me, gave the game the edge over a lot of other platform games. The High Score hall of fame has an ingenious idea of young Monty turning a handle to scroll the scores. All these little features go to form a platform game well worth taking a look at. Your money won't be wasted, and you won't be disappointed.'

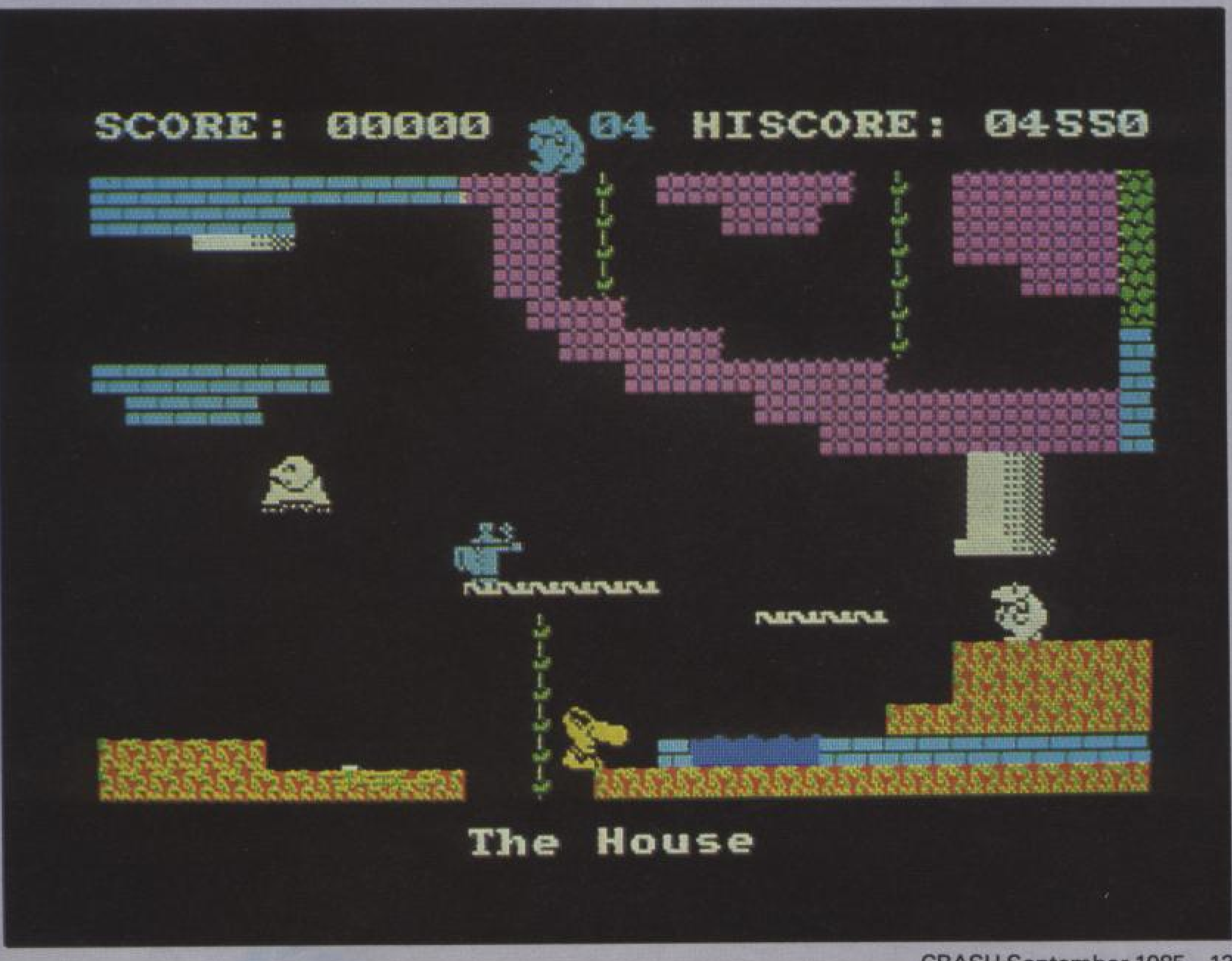
● 'Wanted: Monty Mole *was deservedly popular, and this new game offers a great deal more, much much more in fact. Monty's somersaulting is graphically excellent, very convincing as well as adding another skill element to the game, for his tumbling figure often makes it hard to squeeze between variously weaving nasties. In fact* Monty on the Run *is all about timing, and some of the situations take a lot of practice to get right. This is one of the very best of multi-screen platform games, with loads of screens, many different situations, gags and double crosses. I thought the lifts were marvellous, and the effect when Monty bites the dust under a crusher is quite spectacular. A map will be tough to get together and one is probably essential to complete the game, especially when it comes to remembering all those little items you didn't collect because there appeared to be no way of reaching them earlier. Excellent graphics, good sound, tough gameplay — in fact a great game.'*

● '*Monty on the Run* is similar to the original Monty game. This style is in my opinion better than some of the other Gremlin productions, I found *Monty OTR* very playable and addictive. The graphics were nice and smooth — somersaulting instead of just jumping seems to be the 'in' thing for this type of game. Monty does this with great ability.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q Left, W right, Y-P up, H-ENTER Down, B-SPACE Jump/Fire
Joystick: Sinclair, Kempston, Cursor
Keyboard play: very responsive, pixel positioning
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: well detailed and animated, varied, fast and smooth
Sound: good
Skill levels: 1, and pretty hard!
Lives: 6
Screens: General rating: a great improvement over last year's Best platform Game.

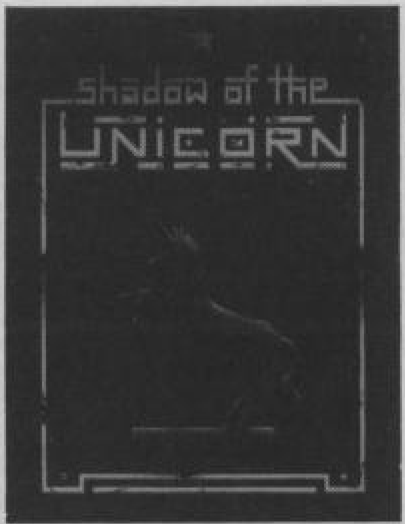
Use of computer	89%
Graphics	91%
Playability	93%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	95%
Value for money	95%
Overall	**94%**



OF SHADOWED ROMS AND UNICORNS . . .

John Minson is despatched to the land of Wally Week to discover what Mikro-Gen have in store for the Mikro Plus.

Last month, CRASH revealed the secrets of the Shadow ROM, Mikro-Gen's astounding add-on which transports the Spectrum into a 64K machine. The Mikro Plus. **But what about the software? This month we reveal the secrets of the** *Shadow of the Unicorn*.



Shadow of the Unicorn, which is to be the first game in the Micro Plus range, is scheduled for release in mid September and will sell for £14.95. For your fifteen pounds you'll get an innocuous-looking black box, (in appearance very much like any number of Spectrum peripherals), a tape containing the bulk of the game code, a map and a seventeen-chapter illustrated novel. Mikro-Gen have commissioned the book-with-the-game from program author, Dale McLoughlin, and it sets out the background to the adventure. Oh . . . and five pee change!

The book tells a tale: long ago, far away in a land where peace had reigned since before living memory, an ancient locked book was found. When its key was turned all manner of evils were loosed and two hitherto peaceful nations were plunged into bloody war.

As the novel ends, the game begins. You have a cast of ten characters to guide towards the completion of ten separate tasks that will return the land to its former idyllic state. Prince Mithulin; Avorath, the wizard whose staff has been lost; Holdin, a military commander, and Queen Rolquin. Ulin-Gail is a satyr, part of a race whose members normally shun humans, while Sharmek is a dwarf leader; Guinol belongs to a race of subterraneans and Vilyan is a woodman. Kielmath, the sorceress, and Lairmath, an apprentice wizard, were turned evil when the book was opened, but will come over to your side as the game progresses.

The land itself is vast, with six and a half thousand locations, each one looking onto three more distant ones. There are towns and castles to contend with, as well as the Nalesh — unpleasant half-sized creatures which have to be killed swiftly.

All this has taken 500K of source code, developed on a six-user HM Systems Minstrel. Obviously there isn't room in the Spectrum to develop it all until the shadow rom is connected — and as this must be dedicated to the game it's a chicken and egg situation. Certainly all 64K will be packed with code, and the programmers are currently busy trading off features to make best use of that memory. There may still be alterations to both the game as I saw it and the characters shown here before the final version for release is completed.

Mikro Plus offers more than just larger programs. On connecting the unit you're immediately presented with a menu that allows you to load the game from tape or microdrive, or you can enter the tape alignment routine. Previous tape-based Azimuth adjustment routines, as well as costing extra, have depended on you getting the program into memory in the first place — from tape! As this one is contained in the firmware, all you have to do is enable the routine and then play a tape into it; obtaining maximum tape head response is simplicity itself.

Once you've loaded a Mikro Plus game, you'll encounter another feature: a second menu allows you to copy the loaded code onto tape or microdrive automatically. It's all most sophisticated, and when you consider that there's also a built-in joystick port, it really does look like Mikro-Gen have made a breakthrough in user friendliness. This is of course totally alien to the doings of their previous hero (hero?!!) **Wally Week**. Does this voyage into the realm of fantasy signal an end to the Wally clan? Not a bit of it. Some more downloading and it's time for a special early sneak preview of the Christmas Wally game, *Three Weeks in Paradise*. Sworn to secrecy, I can't say more than that it takes the Wally format another step forward and features W Week in a loincloth! And of course it's a Mikro Plus game, but if I reveal more they'll send Harry the Hippie round to play me his Grateful Dead bootlegs!







Another quick download and I'm watching some of the fastest, smoothest 3D vector graphics I've seen on the Spectrum. They're part of the next Mikro Plus release which is a science fiction adventure.

Mikro-Gen have invested the greater part of £130,000 in this breakthrough and ordered 25,000 units of *Unicorn*. I don't think their trust in it is misguided — in fact it could take the home micro world by storm. If you can't wait until the official release date — 17th September — you can enjoy a preview of *Unicorn* at the PCW Show in London a couple of weeks earlier.

SOUTHERN BELLE

Producer: Hewson Consultants
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mike Male and Bob Hillyer**

The authors of this game are in fact air traffic controllers rather than train drivers — you may remember that Mike wrote Hewson's *Heathrow Air Traffic Control*. Bob, his colleague, is the chuff-chuff nut, so the the writing of what must be the first steam train simulation isn't such an unnatural progression from Mike's earlier work. The simulation is based on the workings of a King Arthur class locomotive, typically used on the London to Brighton route. In those great and glorious days of railway travel, the carriages on that route were so luxurious that the train came to be known as the Southern Belle

During your second stage of life you may have dreamt of being an engine driver, but it really isn't as easy as you might like to think. The Hewson simulation goes a long way to introducing the practical difficulties that might be met by an engine driver, particularly one on the Southern Belle route. But, should you simply want to 'have a ride' on a steam train, then the authors have provided a demo mode which presents you with a high speed, expertly driven journey from London to Brighton, something along the lines of that well known black and white film. The instructions that come with the game are divided into two sections. The first section could be usefully read while the game is loading, as it introduces the concepts and helps you come to terms with the complicated controls.

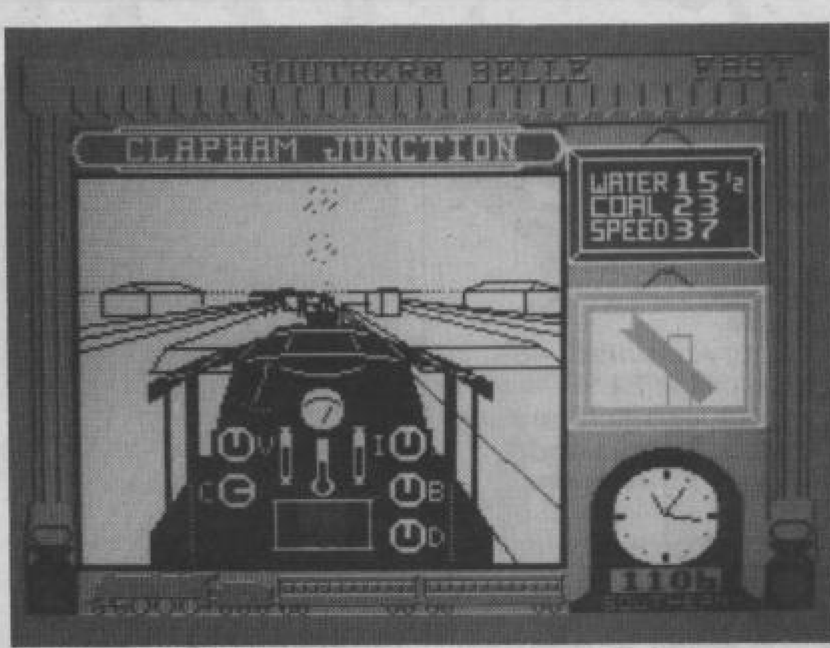
The instructions detail how a steam engine works, and that knowledge is important if you are to appreciate the effects of the various controls, or indeed even why some of them are necessary. Also, there are a number of regulations that must be observed, like those relating to the use of the whistle. When you 'drive' the train at the highest level you will be marked down for a number of faults, including not observing any pertinent rules, failing to keep good time, poor fuel economy and general reckless driving.

The instruments that can be seen on screen by the driver, and therefore the player, include the water and pressure gauges and the position of the various control levers: the regulator, controls the flow of steam to the cylinders; cut off, determines at which part of the cylinder cycle steam will be admitted; vacuum brake, five degrees of braking power; the blower, used to prevent gas and sparks coming into the cab when the train is in a tunnel; the injectors, regulate the water flow from the tank to the boiler and finally, the dampers which regulate the volume of air flowing into the firebox.

The firebox must be kept stoked and fuelled to provide the maximum safe temperature: a simple operation in itself, but while a key press is enough to shovel in some more coal, don't forget to open the firedoor first! Keeping a fire in is one thing, but as any good driver will tell you, you must look at the smoke coming from the engine to determine just how efficient it is. For example, very light smoke means that too much air is getting into the fire while dark smoke means you should let more air in.

Outside the cab itself another section keeps you informed about your water and coal stocks, speed, and the condition of any signals on the line. The all-important railway clock hasn't been left out either. If you make any mistakes on a run then a message will appear at the bottom of the screen telling you where you have gone wrong: 'BLOWBACK, CREW INCAPACITATED', for instance, means that you failed to open the blower when entering a tunnel.

Given the complexity of the task in hand it's as well that the authors have provided a number of different difficulty levels. The easiest, 'the training run' follows the same schedule as the demonstration, but the player can choose which of the train's controls he is responsible for, just the regulator, cut off and brake right up to the fifth level giving you total control. The tasks that you don't want are controlled by the computer. When you feel a little more reckless (or competent) you can have a go at some of the more difficult schedules. Option three on the main menu gives you an easy run with speed limits but no stops. Option five gives you a chance to break the the London to Brighton record set in 1903. The final option is called 'Problem run' — on this journey you can expect to have to cope with a wide variety of dilemmas, and if you manage maximum points on that run you might qualify for a real train to play with!



Clapham Junction looms ahead in SOUTHERN BELLE, Hewson's train simulation. After ten minutes play, it's clear that childhood fantasies of being an engine driver simplified the task enormously.

CRITICISM

● **'I'm not really what you could call a train buff, and to be honest I can't see what people enjoy in looking at noisy and dirty machines on wet Sunday afternoons. I think that's a good qualification for writing an unbiased review. The first surprise I had was the pile of instructions that came with the game. I thought it was just a case of add coal and water and hold on tight. Afterwards I am convinced that it's a great deal easier to fly the simulated planes to drive this train. Hewson, in their wisdom have allowed for all levels of abilities from just being a passenger to full scale panic.** *Southern Belle* **contains some well drawn graphics. Although they tend to scroll a little jerkily, the overall effect works quite well. If you like simulations then this one must be a technonuts delight watching all the dials and gauges and levers. I certainly recommend this game to those of you who enjoy simulations and those who tend towards the mechanical side of life.'**

● *'My first impression of* Southern Belle *was quite different to my final verdict. This is a very complicated simulation providing a great deal of variation. The game is hard to come to terms with because there is so much to do and you are kept very busy, but once mastered, it's brilliant. The job becomes very exciting and involved when attempting speed runs but at high speed you must always be very careful not to de-rail the train. There's a great deal of skill involved and hardly any luck, a must for the simulation lovers.'*

● 'If you can cope with the mass of learning needed to master this train you should have quite a lot of fun. It offers lots of variations but really comes into its own when the player has a good idea what he is doing. It not very pleasant to find yourself, as I did, hairing into Brighton Station at 67 mph. On that score I am a little saddened that the really dramatic stuff, like crashing into the station, is such a let down. The threat of a huge and noisy explosion would have added something. On the whole though, this game is worth mastering mainly because it is such a challenge'

COMMENTS

Control keys: too many to list here
Joystick: not required
Keyboard play: well thought out
Use of colour: very limited
Graphics: effective but slightly jerky
Sound: pretty sparse, rhythm of the train does come across
Skill levels: 6, plus 5 training levels
Lives: N/A **Screens:** N/A
General rating: a very well thought out and challenging simulation

Use of computer	82%
Graphics	79%
Playability	76%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	80%
Value for money	85%
Overall	**84%**



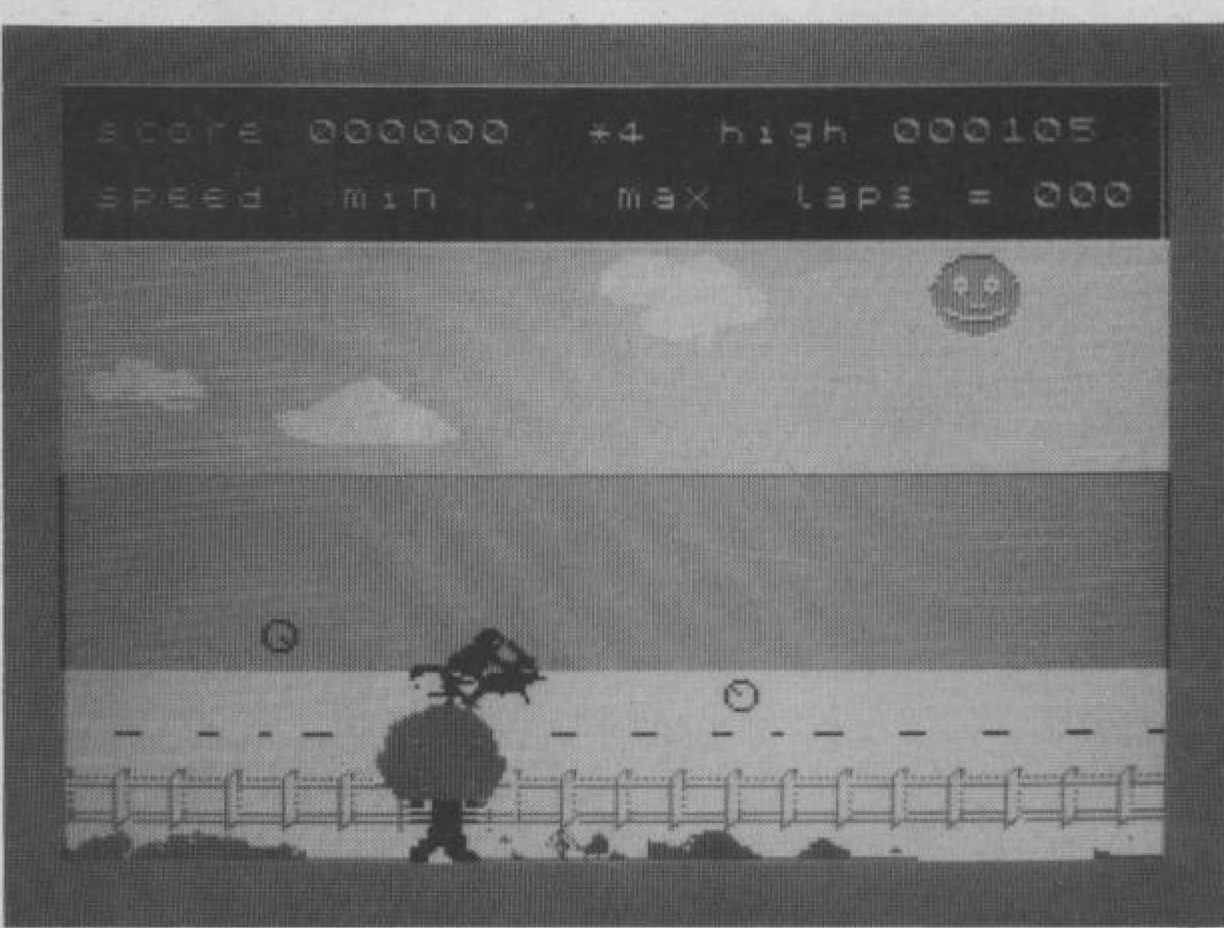
DESERT BURNER

Producer: Creative Sparks
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **R Poole and T Murray**

Desert Burner, we are told, is a code name for a very hot motor bike. Not only can it travel at speeds greater than 200 mph but it is also equipped with forward-firing twin cannons. The reason for the existence of this beast? Well, you as a member of a 'small but highly organised band of freedom fighters' are going to need it to deliver secret plans to another secret group and so help bring about the downfall of a very nasty and generally oppressive government.

You are given a side view the road on which you are riding the bike, and the road itself runs along the bottom of the screen with the desert sloping off behind, into infinity. There are two modes in which to play this game. The simplest only requires you to guide the bike away from the multitude of aggressive helicopters, dodging bombs they drop. If you manage to shoot a few down then all well and good, because you'll get a few points for your trouble. The hardest way to play the game is with your 'detection system' disabled, which means that all of the obstacles on the road, be they dead trees, cars, buses or just great potholes, must now be steered round or jumped over. They present no problem with the detection system enabled, however!

Control of the bike is simplicity itself. It can be made to accelerate or decelerate by moving the joystick left or right, and the speed at which you are moving is shown at the top of the screen. If you want to jump, then accelerate and push the joystick diagonally right. A jump or a wheelie will give you a 'nose up attitude' which, if timed well, should allow you to blow a few choppers out of the sky. The road is repeated endlessly with the number of laps and the number of points scored being recorded on the top section of the screen.



The world's longest and most dangerous Ring Road, in DESERT BURNER. Round and round and round you go, popping off the odd nasty while the sun grins down mercilessly.

CRITICISM

● **'After some in depth research I have discovered that this 'game' is Creative Spark's answer to Firebird's** *Don't Buy This.* **Originally it was to be called** *Whatever you do, if you never buy another game again for Lloyd's sake don't buy this.* **Oh! how I wish that was true. For some time now Creative Sparks have managed to produce some pretty reasonable, value for money games for their Sparklers range, but this is utter, unadulterated rubbish. The graphics are unbelievably bad. Attribute problems, huh! I've seen entire helicopters vanish without trace and then suddenly reappear. Scenario: piffle, where is the sense in having a game that demands that in one mode you should steer your way around hazards and in another not? Yet the hazards are still there and just add to the general mess of the display. What's more I can't help feeling that having to jump over trees that are GROWING BY THE SIDE of the road is just too silly for words. And another thing, the inlay card says that we are undertaking a long perilous journey: we are, but in circles, I know this because the program is counting the LAPS. Difficulty: none, it's harder to be hit by the bombs than it is to avoid them. Don't be tempted to buy this game just to see how bad it is, take my word for it and wait for Creative Sparks to turn up with something better, I know they can.'**

● *'There do seem to be a lot of bugs in this one — it has a tendency to crash at frequent intervals. The graphics aren't very good and the characters a little jerky. When you make the bike do a wheelie it looks as if the little man is defying all known laws of physics. The sound just about manages a few spot effects. Controlling the bike only takes three keys: accelerate; jump and fire — so it's a very easy game to play. Generally I didn't enjoy this game as it got very monotonous.'*

● *'Desert Burner* is a moon buggy game but on a bike in a desert. It's moderately playable, but I much prefer the normal versions. This game is much better played by using the keyboard than with a joystick. If the graphics had been a lot better and smoother this might not be such a bad game but as it is it's pretty average.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Caps shift to accelerate, Z to jump, space to fire
Joystick: Sinclair 2, Kempston and Cursor
Keyboard play: better than joystick
Use of colour: bright but graphics clash a lot
Graphics: jerky, poorly designed and generally bad
Sound: poor
Skill levels: two
Lives: 5
Screens: continuous scrolling
General rating: pretty poor

Use of computer	52%
Graphics	37%
Playability	45%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	41%
Value for money	50%
Overall	**48%**



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KERRASH! N·E·W·S I

THE YOUNG ONES ARE ON THE RAMPAGE

John Marshall of **Orpheus Software** rang to tell us that he's an expert at cooking basmati rice and his girlfriend makes wonderful stuffed peppers. None of this was really relevant, but it filled in time while an 'official statement' was hurriedly prepared about their forthcoming game based on the telly series *The Young Ones*. With editorial control for the game in the hands of the anti-social heroes, it promises to be unique (well different anyway).

There now follows an official press statement: **Orpheus' Managing Director, Paul Kaufman said, 'As far as I am concerned** *The Young Ones* will be the only game worth buying this Christmas. We have spent 8 months on the development of the game and you can be guaranteed fans of the series will not be disappointed. This is the game that everyone's been waiting for. It will be a subtle blend of psychology and extreme violence.'

Phew! The unofficial quote from MD Paul Kaufman was 'My bowels exploded with laughter when I saw this game', but as he doesn't want that printed we won't mention it.

Orpheus wrote a pilot version of the game ages ago and has been negotiating for the rights against fierce competition since January. In the game, which features the four major characters Rick, Vyvyan Basterd, Neil Pye and Mike the Cool Person, you can choose to play any one of them, the computer then controls the other three. All the characters have realistic personalities with memories, so they react towards you accordingly and can be helpful or even rude. The action takes place in the house of the series and is helpfully described by John as 'a sort of arcade adventure but it isn't really.' There is text involved but no text input is required by the player, and the characters talk back in some fiendishly secret way that Orpheus won't yet reveal.

The Young Ones will be released on the 1st of October, look for more details next month. Wow, heavy man . . .

Mail Order Missive

Yesterday, Auntie Aggie, the CRASH Mail Order Queen took a break from chatting up software distributors and left off arranging her social calendar for the Personal Computer World Show to pop down and ask us to tell people who order things from her department to stop sending coins in the post.

It seems the new-fangled machines the Post Office now uses to sort mail get bunged up be letters which contain coin of the realm, and the Posties have to unjam them every time you send a pound coin or other bits of metal to us. This annoys the boys on the sorting line — so much that they charge us £1.70 odd for each and every coin-containing envelope that they have to hand deliver in a very sorry state.

Bad news, indeed, for if you send us a pound coin and a few coppers for a back issue to complete your collection, we end up making a loss before we even get to send you your magazine. So in future, cheques and postal orders only — or we'll have to knock off the cost of receiving your letter before we do anything. OK? OK.

One last point: could you chap and chapesses who write in with a complaint or problem that needs sorting include a telephone number? Then we can 'phone you and sort things out quickly . . .

Nag over, Aggie's gone back to her telephone. Don't make her come back down here again moaning . . . pretty please?

HELLO? HELLO? CAN YOU FIX MY SPECTRUM?

Well, we didn't actually print the wrong telephone number for 'Technician Services' in our Spectrum Doctor feature in the June Issue. We printed it with the spacing between the digits incorrect, which has apparently caused a large number of wallies to use the code for Bristol with the second group of digits, instead of the number we printed.

As a result, a poor fellow in Bristol has been plagued with people ringing up asking him to fix their broken Spectrums. Which is not fair. So stop it. He can't. Ring 093 484 3460 if you want to get in touch with Mr Brown of **Technicom Services**. (That *was* our mistake — we called the firm Technician Services.)

And while we're on the subject of repairing broken Spectrums, Mr Brown informs us that the cheapest 'safe' way to post computers is by **Compensation Fee Parcel Post**. This is apparently a little slower than letter post or recorded delivery, but it's cheaper and the contents of your package are insured. Mr Brown says that £1.70 covers postage on a Spectrum by this method and insures it for £125, while recorded delivery only compensates you for £16 worth of losses. You learn something every day.

Adrian Slater (left, slightly damp) receives his prize for getting the highest validated score on Wizards Lair from the Bearded Big Cheese of Bubble Bus, Sandy Marchant (right, somewhat soggy). A wet and rainy day — but that's the British summer for you!





● Made the footplate at last! On the left, looking cool and casual we have Mike, and on the right, smiling while hanging on for dear life, we have Bob.

CHUFF CHUFF PUFF

Ahh. The raging furnace, scalding steam, grit, grease and grime — no, not the working conditions of CRASH minions, but the footplate of a puffing, panting, live steam locomotive.

Hewson's launch games in style, and *Southern Belle* their steam engine simulation made its debut in Didcot, at the Great Western Railway Society's Headquarters, where, having wined and dined in a luxury restaurant car, the assembled hacks trundled happily up and down the line on the footplate of Thomas the Tank Engine's second cousin.

The co-authors of the game are Bob Hillyer, a self-confessed steam train fanatic, and Mike Male, author of Hewson classics *Heathrow ATC* and *Nightflite II* (if they'd stayed nocturnal for this program would it have been called *Starlight Express?*). You have to pilot the pride of Southern Railways from London to Brighton avoiding British Rail practices such as lateness! Options include attempting the line record. The fact that Bob has only beaten it by seconds is a measure of this labour of love's accuracy.

Andrew Hewson also used the occasion to honour the distributors (without whom . . . etc) by presenting Terry Jeffries of Terry Blood with an award for sales of Dragontorc. He also let on that Astro Clone adds intergalactic shoot em ups to Steve Turner's arcade adventure system.

So I departed, leaving my fellow hacks wrangling over who would tie CRASH's very own Mr Spencer to the rails before the next train came.

N·P·U·T·····

WHEEEEEE

It's early days yet, but the ubiquitous CRASH Software Ed, Jeremy Spencer has press-ganged everyone in the office into agreeing to jump from an aeroplane. With a parachute, fortunately.

The Daft fellow suddenly came up with the idea of pushing us all out of a plane flying at several thousand feet while he was enjoying a couple of Sausage Sarnies the other evening, at a local watering hole.

Foolishly, we went along with his plan — *Old Flatulence Bitter* had taken its toll.

It's all in a good cause, really. Some of us will be sproinging out into the great blue yonder over an airfield somewhere in England this Spring. The Red Devils have been coerced into helping the enterprise along, as it's all being done for charity. Dr Barnardos, and The Active Group which provides electronic aids for handicapped children, will both benefit from funds raised.

More details of the whole event will appear in these hallowed pages in due course.

MAN FROM MARS TAKES OVER SINCLAIR RESEARCH

Sinclair Research has a new Chief Executive, in the person of Bill Jeffrey, who was managing director of Sinclair's TV and Communications Division until July 23rd this year, when he was appointed to his new position.

Bill Jeffries joined Sinclair Research less than six months ago, leaving a high powered post with Mars Electronics, a division of Mars (GB) Ltd.

Mr Jeffries' efforts on behalf of Sinclair Research have already had a significant impact on the success of the Pocket TV, which is now available in over 1,000 High Street outlets. He intends to become actively involved with the marketing of Sinclair Research products worldwide, and his marketing contribution to the Pocket TV project has been fully recognised by Sir Clive.

TAILOR MADE MOTOR

Competition is hotting up on the tape magazines front. The Man from **Argus Press Software** which publishes *Spectrum Computing* and *16†48* rings up to let us know that they are both running a competition to find a computer genius.

Who knows what they'll do with him or her when they find him, her or it, but the first thing they plan to do is to hand over a tailor made Metro Special Edition, or £5,500 in cash

'A Unique chance to win a Unique Car' is the slogan apparently....

DEBTOR OF THE MONTH

Our financial wizards haven't been able to compile their complete chart of bad paying, naughty fellows — they spend too much time actually chasing the money. Finance, however, are coming round to the idea of having a DEBTOR OF THE MONTH slot.

Hmmm. Could prove interesting . . . Next munf maybe.

CRASH ZAPS AMTIX AT PCW

The TOP MEN of Newsfield have decreed that a veritable host of minions shall be despatched to this year's Personal Computer World Show in London. Running from the 4th to 8th September at Olympia, the show will be graced by the full gamut of CRASH types, including, Jeremy Spencer, Roger Kean, Oli Frey, Graeme Kidd, Franco Frey, Sally Newman, Robin Candy, and even Aggie and Denise from Mail order and subscriptions.

And yes! The evil ZZAP! reviewers Gary Penn and Julian Rignall will be in attendance, as will T Shirts, Sweatshirts, Hats and backnumbers for the two magazines.

AMTIX!, a the new magazine for Amstrad Owners to be produced from CRASH Towers will make its debut at the show, with thousands and thousands and thousands (*That's enough thousands —ED*) of copies of a special Issue Zero given away free.

Come and see us on the stand — we might even let you feed us!

USEFUL ADDRESS

Following a number of telephone requests for assistance on *Arcadia*, we feel the most public spirited thing to do is to pass on an address through which *Arcadia* freaks should be able to contact Mark Butler himself. Rabbit software freaks should also be able to get their fan mail to Heather Lamont via the same letterbox, we hear tell.

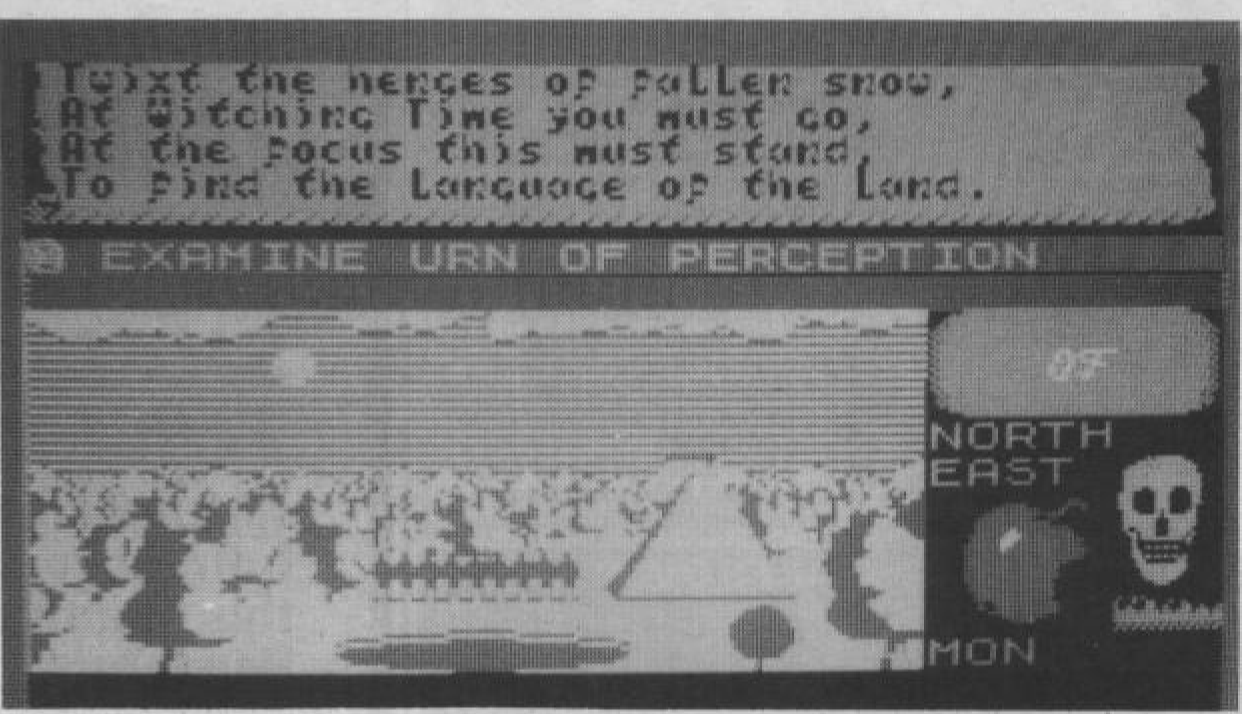
● Mark Butler, Coppice Farm, Coppice Lane, Tarbock, Huyton
☏051 489 2007

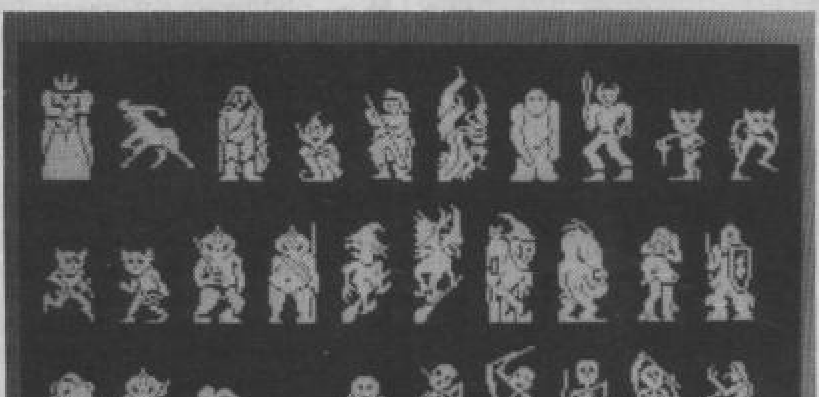
MERELY MANGRAM MERELY M

IT IS something of a delight to get back from holiday and discover a wonderful looking game from a software house whose name is connected with the beginnings of Spectrum software, namely DK'tronics. *Popeye* is graphically masterful, using masking techniques so that the extra large and cartoon-like animated characters move around each other and the various buildings without the least hint of a colour attribute clash. I think it's a delight because not only have we here got a software house whose roots go back to the beginnings of Spectrum software, (and so many of them seem to have suffered badly of late) but one whose game for today shows that there is still a bright tomorrow for Spectrum software development. And gosh, wasn't that a mouthful of a sentence?

I'm not the only one who's been on holiday, Paula Byrne of **Melbourne House** has just come back from the Spanish resort of Terrormolinos, where she enjoyed a typical family package holiday with the added benefits of getting sunstroke, typhoid, being gored by a bull, stuck in prison and getting food poisoning. What's more she took snaps of all these happy incidents and got the programmers of *Hampstead* to turn it all into a game. Naturally they called it *Terrormolinos*, and soon you too will be able to savour the delights of a Spanish holiday, just like Paula. This probably won't make her personally rich and thus able to afford the Bahamas next year, but it always makes you feel better when you know others are enjoying themselves just like you did, and all for £7.95 . . .

However, back to the less than delightful; a London company called **Central Solutions** is releasing four titles under the name of **Pocket Money Software** at the very, very low price of **99p** each. They are called *Devil's Descent* and *Valley of the Dead*, both arcade games, and *A Tangled Tale* and *Crystal Quest* a graphic adventure and a text adventure respectively. In *Valley of the Dead* you guide a balloon through caverns avoiding nasties and the walls. With a left/right control and an 'up' blast to keep you from the effects of gravity, the game offers three different caverns, each with three difficulty levels of linked screens. The first cavern loads automatically but the second and third are loaded separately — a real nuisance. *Devil's Descent* is a 'sort of' Lunar Lander without a moon. In fact it's a vertical version of *Valley of the Dead* — say no more . There are 40 screens to descend through with several difficulty levels to play. Both these two games are written in





A taste of Beyond's ELINDOR showing the 'landscaping' feature, and below, a host of the characters you may meet.

BASIC, and both showed an alarming tendency to crash for no apparent reason. I don't see how anyone can make money out of selling a game for under a pound, but the quality of these two leaves little to the imagination.

Crystal Quest is a Quilled text adventure, and unless I am mistaken, discourteously there is no mention of this fact. It starts on a space ship and the object is to rescue people stranded on planets by beaming down to their surfaces. Being Quilled, the responses are fast and a nice character set has been designed to add some flair. The last, *A Tangled Tale* is a graphic adventure, also Quilled and with a very difficult to read although attractive looking text. It's set somewhere in Wonderland, and you're helping Alice. I think I'll leave the rest to Derek Brewster (who after Gargoyle's recent release has become known as Well Done Derek). A further eleven text-adventures are intended for release almost immediately.

Talking of **Gargoyle Games**, fans of their remarkable graphic adventures *Tir Na Nog* and *Dun Darach* will no doubt be delighted to hear that Greg Follis and Roy Carter are hard at work on a trilogy that will operate in much the same way as the two previous adventures, but the new games are set in space. Greg has worked out a complex scenario spanning centuries and the trilogy will work its way from Man's expansion into space, to his encountering alien and unpleasant intelligences in the furthest reaches of the galaxy that force humankind back to their own solar system and finally to the fight to protect fortress Earth. The three games won't of course encompass quite this magnitude of story, so Greg is writing some pretty hefty chunks of 'intro' to each that will take the story some stages on and set the scene. The first game is called *Mars Port*, and I wonder whether the hero will be a descendant of Cuchulainn . . . ?

Not content with three mammoth adventures, Gargoyle are also releasing what they call A Gargoyle Special Edition 'Just For Fun' — not so much an adventure as an arcader, the game is called *Sweevo's World*. A Sweevo is a Self Willed Extreme Environment Vocational Organism, in other words, a robot. He's supposed to be highly intelligent, capable and dedicated to specific aims — unfortunately things didn't turn out too well, and the result is a bumbling, none too bright great big idiobot that keeps bumping into things. Gargoyle will say no more, but *Sweevo's World* will cost £7.95.

Another game set in space and due in mid-October is **Stephen Crow**'s follow up to the CRASH Smashed *Wizard's Lair* for **Bubble Bus**. Called *Star Quake*, it's about an unstable planet emerging from a black hole which, according to the scientists at Bubble Bus, will explode and cause a star quake so strong that the entire universe will be demolished (presumably for a hyperspace bypass). You have to guide the bio-robot sent to rebuild the unstable core and so prevent universal disaster. The 450 plus locations include features such as anti-gravity lifts, teleportals, security doors, planetary beings and much more besides. It will sell for £7.95 and more when we see it.

Beyond has a host of major programs scheduled for the next few months which include Mike Singleton's third in the Midnight trilogy, *Eye of the Moon*, *Spy vs Spy II*, the second Shadowfire game from Denton Designs, called *Enigma Force*, there's also *Elindor*, another 'landscaping' adventure not unlike the Midnight games, and their big Christmas release *Superman*. *Eye of the Moon* has been delayed somewhat by Mike's 64 game *Quake Minus One*, but he's hoping to get on with finishing *Eye* starting about now. *Spy vs Spy II* I have seen on

the Commodore, and it looks even better than the first. The two perpetual enemies are on a tropical island in search of a secret weapon. You win the game by discovering it first and escaping on a submarine. The display is very similar to the first game with its split screens for each player, but unlike part one, on this island you must make the traps by collecting and assembling pieces from the surrounding landscape. The island is 3D in the sense that moving to the 'back' of the screen will take you into another location if there is an exit there.

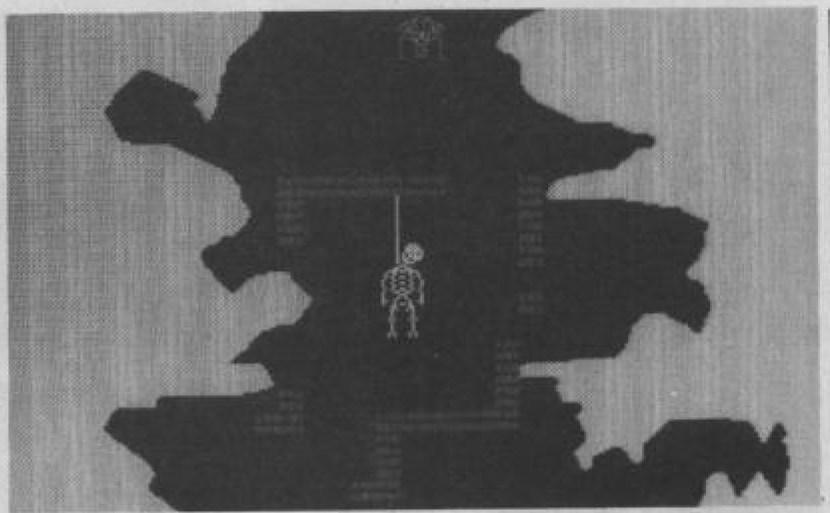
An interesting program just out is the *Shadowfire Tuner*. This icon-driven program allows alteration of various factors of the main game. On loading you are presented with a display similar to that of *Shadowfire* itself, and by using the joystick, a cursor can be moved across the main menu icons to select sub-menu icons. In the sub-menus the main characters' attributes like strength, agility and stamina may be altered; you can also alter the start location of particular objects like grenades, laser guns etc; you can alter the start locations of various people too, in fact anyone except Kryxix and Zoff. It also allows you to change the enemies' attributes — they only have one, ie strength. For each attribute there is a bar graph and and increase/decrease icon. Replacing objects or people is done by scrolling over a map of the ship section by section and of course this also allows you to map the game. The *Shadowfire Tuner* costs £3.50, and for a month will only be available exclusively from CRASH Mail Order **(see page 19)**, and thereafter from Beyond, but it won't be appearing in the shops.

Martech have a couple of pre-Christmas releases planned, one of which promises to be very exciting to arcade/strategy fans. Have any of you seen the make-it-yourself model monster kits that Tomy market, called **Zoids**? If you haven't, then Zoids are robot dinosaurs of varying size and power driven by goodie or baddie androids. The monsters are heavily armed and battle against each other incessantly (see the forthcoming series of comics from Marvel). The toys all move mechanically and the bigger ones like 'Redhorn the Terrible' and 'The Mighty Zoidzilla' are battery powered. Well Martech are releasing *Zoids* the computer game sometime in mid-October. What makes this game extra-special, however, is its programming team, **The Electronic Pencil Company** whose prestige is riding high after the massive success of *The Fourth Protocol*.

There's a profile of The Electronic Pencil Company in this issue with a bit more about *Zoids*, and we'll be featuring a large preview of the game quite possibly in the following issue of CRASH.

The other Martech release is *Geoff Capes Strongman* based on the sporting exploits of former Olympic shot putter, World Strongman and Highland Games champion. This isn't a joystick bashing sports game, but revolves more around the strategy required to bring Geoff to the peak of physical fitness for each event. The actual events then require skill and split second timing to result in success. Both games will retail at between £8 and £9.

Other items of forthcoming interest must include **Odin**'s follow up to *Nodes of Yesod* and called *Robin O' the Wood*, (but there's a preview of that elsewhere in this issue) and *Elite* from **Firebird**. This has unfortunately hit some programming snags and been delayed — we were hoping to have seen it by now and provide you with a few screen shots since the other day Firebird despatched a BT courier hot with copy from the Scotland-based programmers to Ludlow International airport (which meant getting off the train at Birmingham and then taking a two hour bus ride) but the demo had some bugs and so the courier whisked through Birmingham back to London leaving a weekend emergency previewing team in tears. Life is hard!!!



Screen 33 of DEVIL'S DESCENT



And I mustn't forget Steve Turner (well who could?), who has a new one out soon for **Hewson Consultants**. Steve, never at a loss for words says, 'Shoot em ups are back in fashion, so I've developed loads of new techniques to slot them into the adventure movie structure.' So what's he on about . . . ? Nothing less than Avalon meets the Seiddab (remember them), The game's called *Astro Clone* after the robotic clones who are battling to outwit the Seiddab warriors on 21st century planetoids. Despite the shoot em up aspect, Steve promises the same sort of problem-solving moving graphics as he used in the two *Avalon* games.

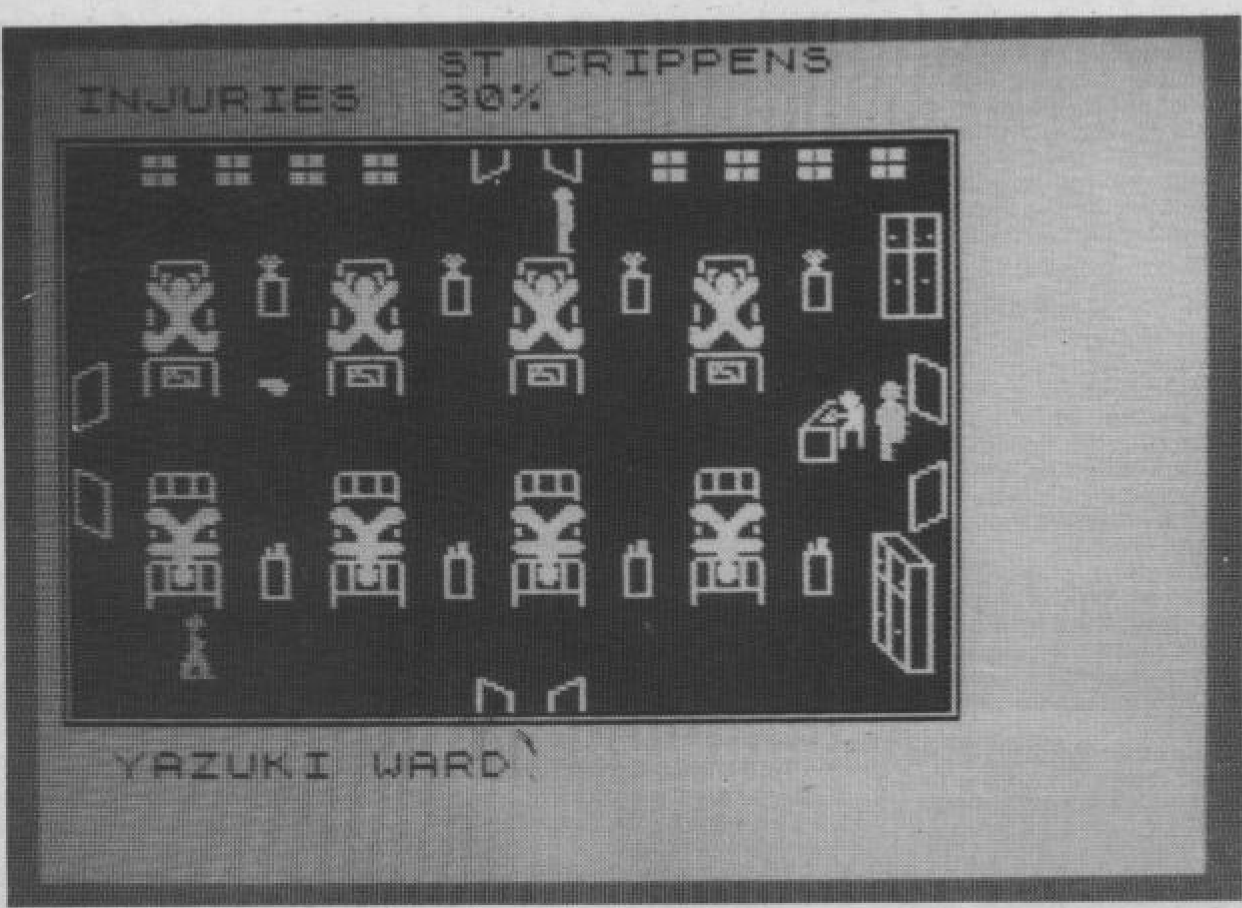
In keeping with the hallowed software tradition of releasing similar games at the same time, **Elite** have announced *International Basketball*, although there's some confusion because I heard some mutterings that Platinum Productions (who tend to do stuff for US Gold and Ocean) were also doing a conversion, and now a press release has appeared from **Imagine** announcing *World Series Basketball* (£7.95) for the Spectrum. The game features 3D vector graphics 'to increase the player's perception of space on the screen', as well as a two player option. Sticking to sport, **UK Gold** (the British aspect of US Gold) is releasing the exclusively licenced *Mexico 86 World Cup* two weeks prior to the commencement of the World Cup finals (no, don't ask me when that is, do I have time to watch football on the telly?)! This will cost some £8.95.

Legend are releasing *Komplex City* this month at £9.95 and as I write a preview copy is supposedly winging its way towards me so that I can see for myself that the Right Hon Jeremy Spencer KGB CDM 1942 Morgan wasn't conned by big square blobs moving around on the screen without attribute problems. Legend are naturally proud of this development, so it's a pity DK'tronics beat them to it.

The very lovely looking *Rupert and the Toymaker's Party* by **Argus Press Software** is also being made available on the Spectrum during September. There's rather more to the graphics (at least on the 64) than there is to the game, but it's still quite a tough platformer. **PSS** are looking to an old arcade sport for their next hit, and have released *Macadam Bumper* (£7.95), a piece of French software which, apart from being a jolly game, is also a pinball construction set — or what the French would call a *Flipper Modulaire*. There's a prize riding on it too — a real pinball machine to the best designer of a table using the game. Also from France comes their *MCoder 3*, which has done rather well, I'm told, in Tech Niche (A Collins Anglo/Francaise Dictionary is not required).

Last but not least (and talking of compilers), the compilation craze is catching on, and who better to do same than the *compilateur d'extraordinaire* Virgin? The well known music tapes 'Now That's What I Call Music' have inspired **Virgin Games** to put out *Now Games*. The first tape contains *Lords of Midnight* (Beyond), *Arabian Nights* (Interceptor), *Everyone's a Wally* (Mikro-Gen), *Brian Bloodaxe* (The Edge), *Falcon Patrol II* and *Strangeloop* (both by Virgin). The tape is being supported by a £100,000 TV campaign and the compilation costs £8.95.

There's probably a load more tidbits I've left out, but my concentration is suffering from all the chaos caused by everyone getting ready for the Personal Computer World Show, where CRASH, ZZAP! 64 and Newsfield's newest addition, AMTIX! (Amstrad don't you know) will all be on show. More Merely next Month.



Just dying to get out? ST CRIPPEN's is to the average hospital, as a caption writer's office is to a penthouse suite. Dodge the bedpans . . . and mind the nasty nurses in the corridors and wards of the horror hospital.

St.CRIPPENS

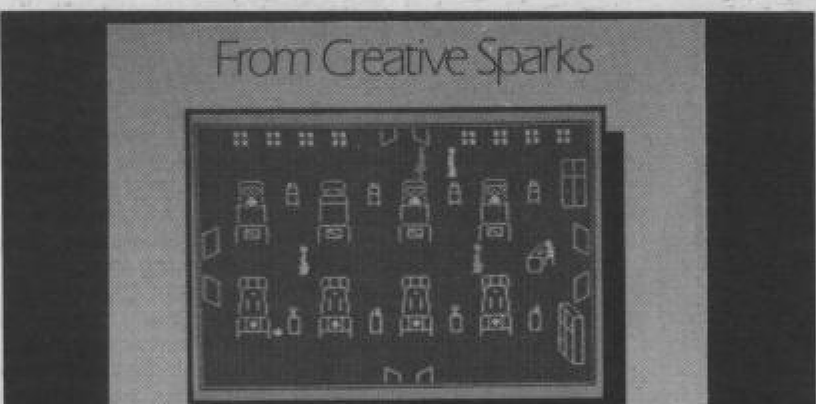
Producer: Creative Sparks
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **D Bowler**

If you have ever been in hospital then then this game could rekindle some of your worst memories. It seems that you have suffered some sort of slight accident and have woken up in a hospital, assessed your injuries and your accommodation and decided that the former doesn't merit the latter. In short, you want to go home.

St.Crippins must be the nastiest hospital on Earth. The inlay card claims that all the patients are 'literally dying to get out'. The first problem that you will have to cope with is the fact that while you are still wearing your hospital pyjamas, you haven't a hope of slipping past the security guards. Your most important task is to try and find some togs, and the only sure way of doing this is to trade with the other patients. Moving round the hospital would simply be a matter of weaving in and out of the fixtures and fittings, beds, tables, boilers and piles of washing. Except that all of the hospital staff are not only under orders to restrain any wandering patients, but they are induced so to do by a bounty for each one they catch.

Each room or ward contains the furniture that you would normally expect to find in a hospital, and is occupied by at least two members of staff. The moment you walk in through a door they will start to home in on you, thinking of their bounty. Try to evade them by dodging back and forth inbetween the rows of beds. At all times be careful not to be trapped. If a staff member gets you then expect a very severe ticking off, so severe in fact, that every encounter with a staff member will add to your injuries.

Initially, you are only ten per cent injured but after being caught five times your injuries will have increased to thirty five percent at which stage your character will have very visable limp. By the time you reach sixty percent injuries you will be limping about on crutches which limits your speed somewhat. Beware of the other dangers, bed pans left on floors, patients playing darts and even the results of genetic experiments. On your travels you should come across a patient who may be willing to trade clothing in exchange for other items that need to collect from other wards. Fully clothed, you can begin the long and dangerous trek to safety. Good health.



CRITICISM

● **'Nothing about this game particularly stands out as being good but there's something about it that appeals to my sick sense of humour. I love the way your man's health deteriorates as he touches nurses and the like. The way the other patients behave is also very amusing — for instance if you walk in front of the television in the geriatric ward, those watching will leap up and beat you in. The graphics in this game are not very detailed so it is quite a job to work out which one of the figures walking around the ward is yours. A nice little game that errs on the side of monotony after a while.'**

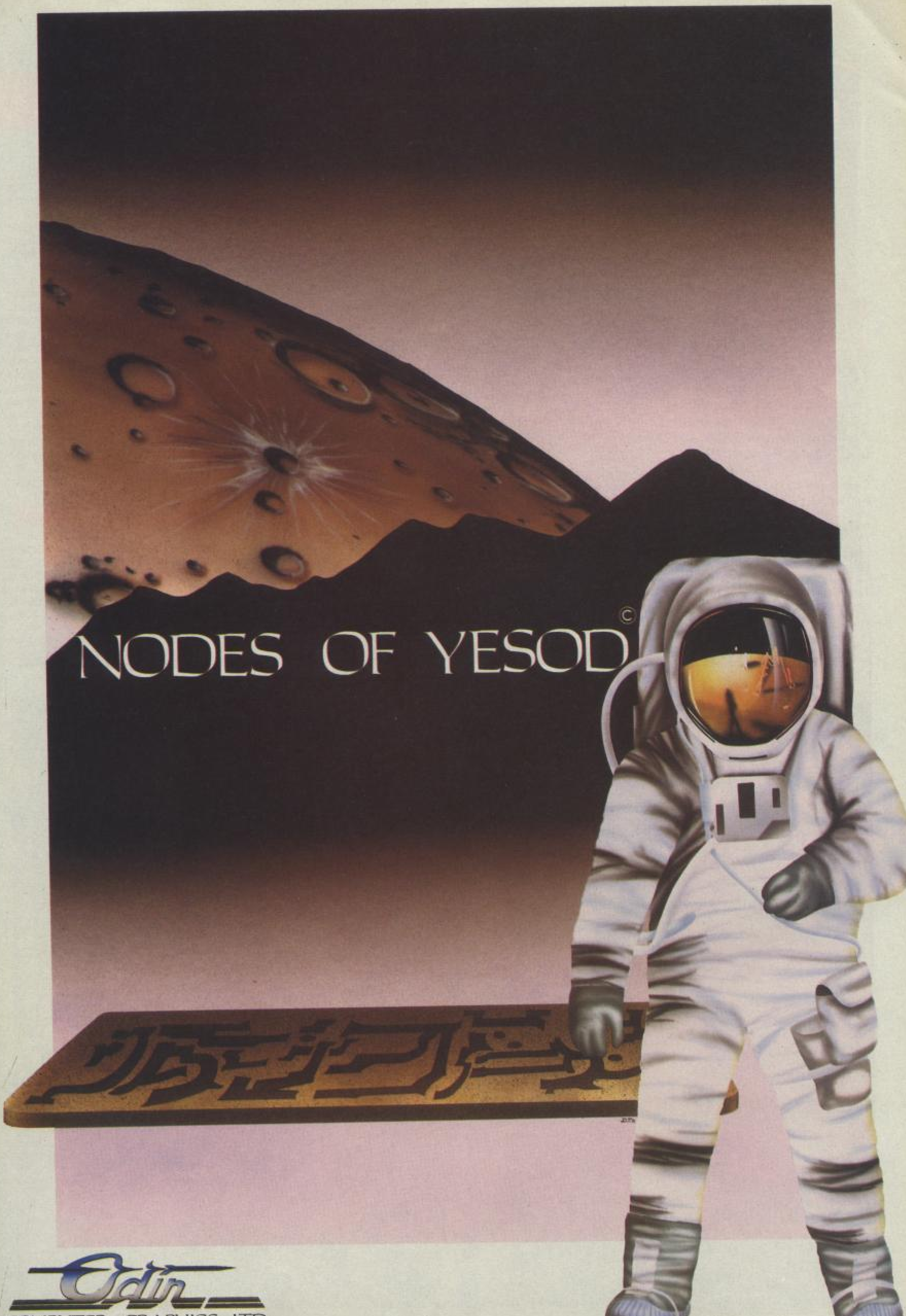
● *'This maze-ish sort of game left me with mixed feelings. Yes, there were certainly elements that I enjoyed, but also many things I disliked.* St Crippins *is, as far as this sort of game goes, nothing special. But some parts, like the escapee struggling as his health deteriorates, are good fun. The graphics are pretty poor and the characters very small. Movement of the figures is again nothing special but in their own way they are quite neat.'*

● 'This is a very difficult game to come to terms with. I hugely enjoyed the wit and humour of it all, which must certainly be its strongest point. The graphics are not very smart but they do work very well, and to be fair I think that the authors have done very well making the character do the things he does given his size. Falling over the bed pan is very well animated as well as the obvious deterioration in his health. For the money I think this is a good game if only because you're bound to have quite a few laughs over it.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: cursor keys
Joystick: Sinclair 2, Cursor and Kempston
Keyboard play: poor choice
Use of colour: restricted
Graphics: simple
Sound: fair
Skill levels: one
Lives: 18
Screens: lots
General rating: a simple but very witty game

Use of computer	45%
Graphics	55%
Playability	70%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	67%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**72%**


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A CRASH Smash

O•N T•H•E R

ON THE RUN

Producer: Design Design
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.90**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Graham Stafford and Stuart Ruecroft**

Design Design have produced some pretty spectacular games in the past so it was interesting to follow the development of *On the Run* from it's early days as an idea in a Public House to the finished game on the — seemingly — public CRASH software desk. The inlay itemises the features of the game, the most striking of which is an abundance of mushrooms. Also listed are the features not included: orchids; buns and leg warmers. Almost certainly too many late nights writing this one chaps!

Essentially, what Graham and Stuart have cooked up here is a very large and complex maze game. You play the part of Rick Swift, or Rick for short. Rick is the sort of character that makes the news pages for doing-good. This time he has bitten off a little more than he can chew. Anxious that his next stunt should make the front page of every marmalade stained morning rag, Rick accepted a task from the Defence Department to clean up an area that had become contaminated by a spillage of chemical weapons. The plants and wild life that had lived the sort of quiet life normally enjoyed by plants and wildlife, have now suffered from the effects of the chemicals, to such an extent that most of them have mutated into such strange forms and become so miffed by man in general, for his callousness, that they really want to get their own back. Since Rick is the idiot going into the zone he is going to have to cope with the angry mutations which include anything from giant mushrooms to a pair of body-less jaws.

The Ministry had the decency to equip Rick with a suit which will protect him from the effects of the chemicals in the zone. His jet pack helps him move around at speed, which is just as well because the six remaining flasks that must be collected will degrade in one hour — then Rick will be dealing with something a sight more dangerous than a bunch of angry mutated flowers. The suit works well except when it comes into contact with one of the mutations, then it starts to degrade and, unless its energy is restored, will reach the point when it is useless and Rick will pass away.

There are lots of wierd and wonderful objects lying around the maze. Generally they produce one of four effects: death; more energy; get you into another zone or . . . do absolutely nothing at all. The mushrooms are the best and safest source of energy but for everything else you will have to experiment. With regard to the mobile objects within the maze the best action is to zap everything, ask questions later. To make life a little easier you should discover a few smart bombs littered around the place. These are very useful for clearing areas full of mobile mutants.

The maze itself is very large, weighing in at something over 300 screens, and is divided into a number of sections. However, you can only move from one section to another if you have collected one particular object from the area you are already in.

Above the main display a bar graph lets you know the condition of your suit, and above that a clock tells you how much time is left before the flasks degrade. If you collect any smart bombs they will be shown underneath the empty slots waiting to be filled with collected flasks. Points are awarded for killing the mutants and your score is updated at the top left of the screen. The only thing Design Design left out was their traditional high score table, still they do apologise, so that's OK.

CRITICISM

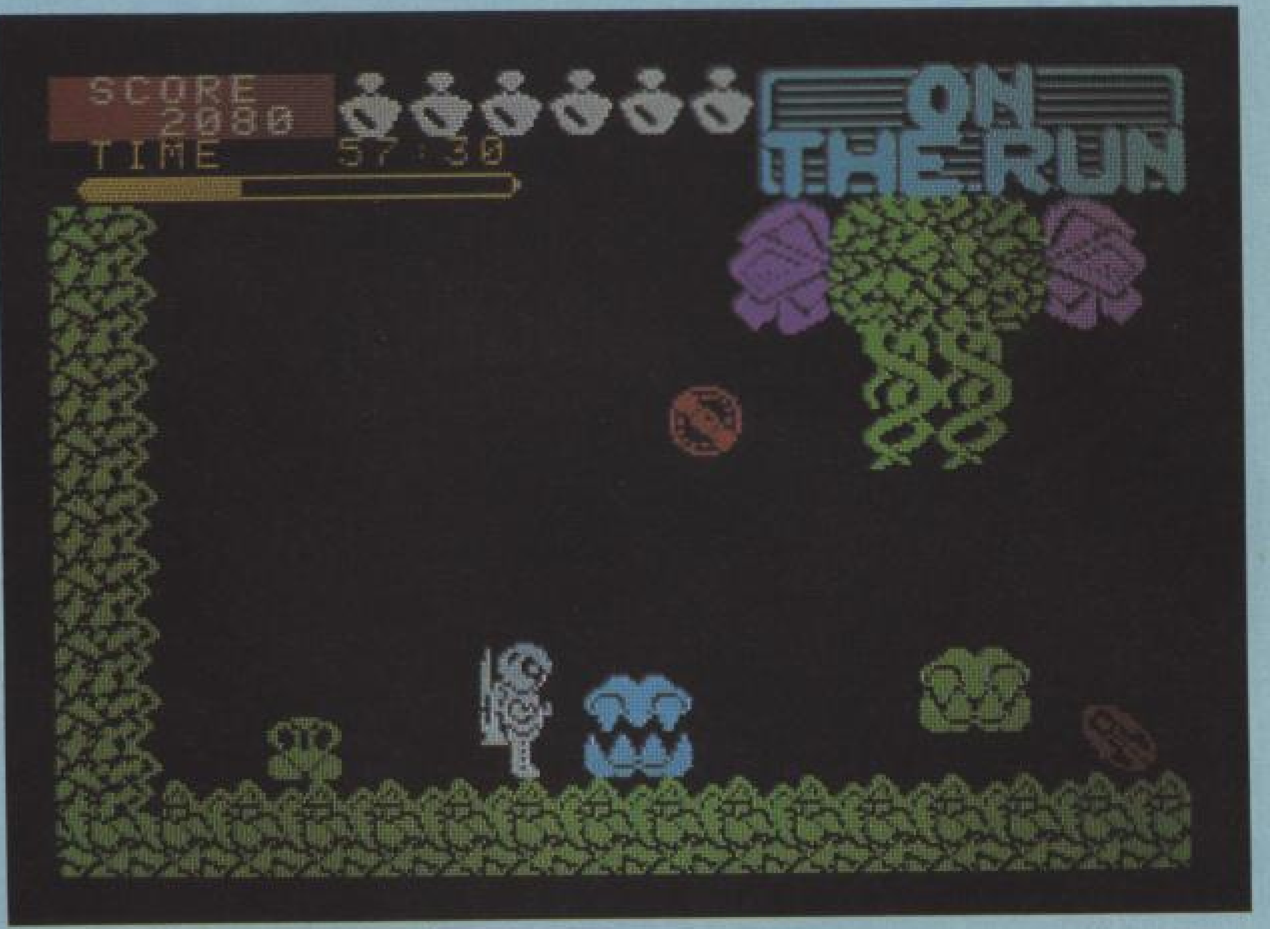
● '*On The Run* is an extremely colourful arcade adventure of the maze variety. The graphics are very neat and very smooth. The game is instantly playable. It

Rick, the goodie-two-shoes types, does battle with furious flora down among the mushrooms in Design Design's ON THE RUN.



includes some very nice touches, for example you can't go through some entrances until you have picked up an object. There is such a variety of objects to pick up it will be some time before you manage to assess the value or danger of any of them. Worthy of a CRASH Smash.'

● *'Where's the front end? I was really looking forward to the huge list of options that seem to have become a Design Design hallmark. Not even a high score table this time, whats the idea chaps? However, after the opening disappointment I was pleased by the really superb graphics — in a way they reminded me of Jetpac from Ultimate. I loved the wide variety of different creatures that inhabit the playing area. Some of them bear a vague resemblance to creatures found in fantasy games. The maze is separated into sections, and frogs guard the entrance to each one. Each new section has more nasties in it so it's tougher to stay alive. Generally I enjoyed playing this game, but what's more I can see myself doing so for the next couple of months.'*

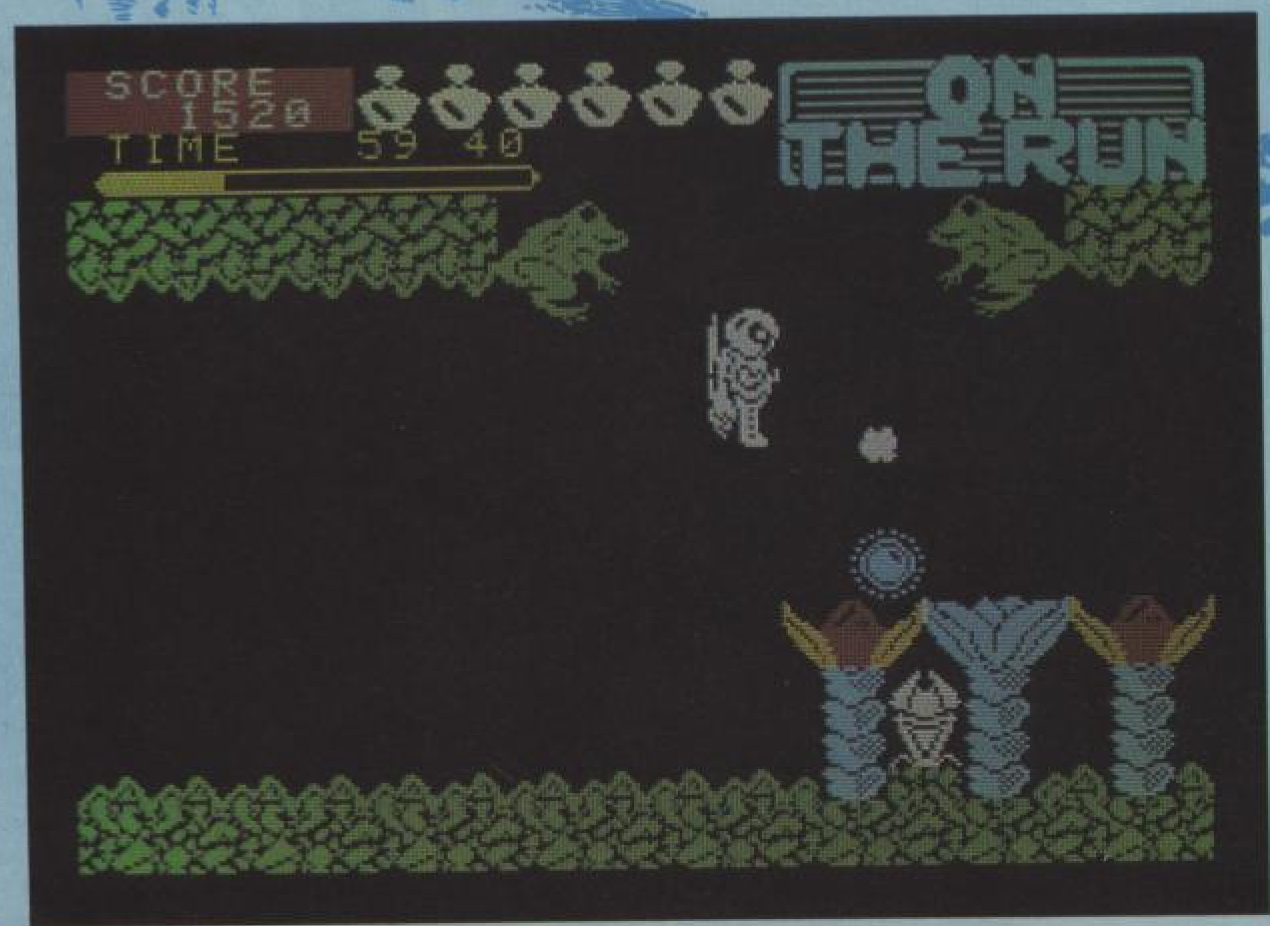


Watch out for those snappy jaws Rick babes . . . they're out to get you before you strut your stuff. MAKE WAY FOR THE MUTANTS! — No, not the Design Design programmers, the maze monsters



● 'My friend lent me his Spectrum when mine collapsed after running this game, but what a way to go! A highly colourful game with great graphics for the various flora and fauna. The irrepressible Design Design humour comes through very strongly, I especially loved the gnashing teeth. The objective is pretty simple but the sheer size of the game demands great stamina and good joystick-jockeying. The things at Des-Des should be proud of this one.'

Below the froggy portals. Somebody muttered something about feeding them before they let you past. A bit like our Software Ed, Jeremy Spencer!



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: responds well
Use of colour: very attractive
Graphics: superb
Sound: limited but it has good squidgy spot effects
Skill levels: one
Lives: one, more energy can be collected
Screens: over 300
General rating: an excellent game which should appeal

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	92%
Playability	85%
Getting started	89%
Addictive qualities	93%
Value for money	85%
Overall	**91%**

THAT'S THE SPIRIT

Producer: The Edge
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Steve Lipowicz, Andrew Blazdell**

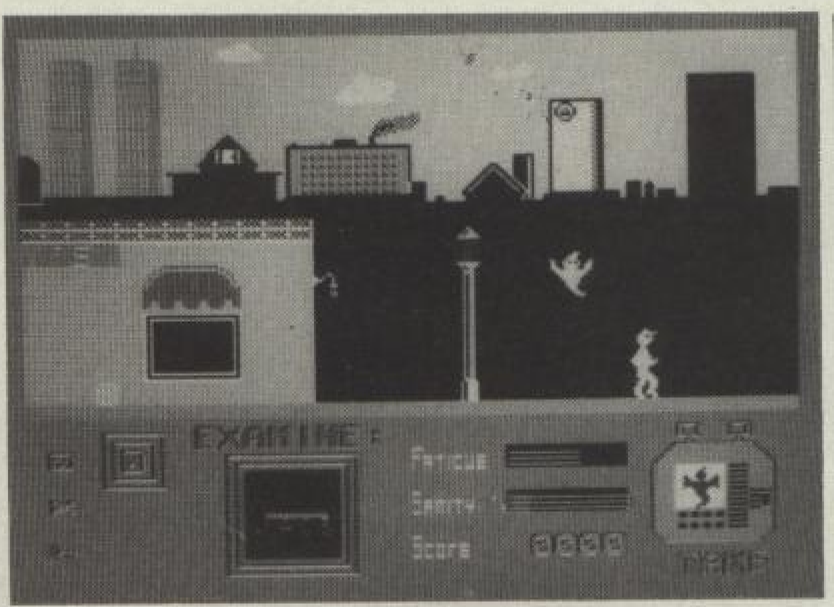
This is one of those games for which you should pack a case, ready for a journey of discovery. You know the sort, the instructions are so vague that you feel you may as well write some of your own.

Which keys to press and how, is well explained — the confusion surrounds the why. The game is set in the future, in a time when the Goverments of the World have taken leave of their senses. Crazy laws are in force: by law, to preserve World Unity, all cities are called New York. The World Goverment also has a bee in its bonnet about spirits. Not the alcoholic spirits that were subject to some equally confused statutes in America, no, this Government wants to impose prohibition on spooks. So, here you are in New York, setting out on your rounds as a sort of futuristic ghost-hunter.

The Edge have kindly provided a keyboard overlay on the reverse of the instructions. (Well it will be an overlay if you have the rubber-keyed job and a sharp knife with which to cut a few holes). Twenty three commands can be invoked by a single key press, so even if you don't fancy cutting holes in your inlay, don't lose it! Glancing at the commands at your disposal will add to your initial confusion. Commands such as 'Eat', 'Take' and 'Examine' are fine. Coming to terms with some of the other commands: 'Connect', 'Throw' or even 'Swear' for example, will take a little more time.

At the start of the game, the main display shows you as a little white character complete with baseball cap, against a backdrop of the New York skyline. Four indicators reside under this main screen. Two bar graphs show your fatigue and sanity levels. The occasional nap reduces fatigue, while avoiding stressful events, such as meetings with ghosts and unpleasant dogs helps preserve sanity. A ghost detector and score indicator are also provided, and an 'examine' facility allows you to take a closer look at objects you've collected.

Your character can move to the left or right, and as you do so the backdrop scrolls behind you. Occasionally you will come across doorways or entrances to subways — it's up to you to find out which are of any value — not all the buildings can be entered.



What's that ghost doing by that lamp post? Is it a canine spook? While taking a close look at the key you've collected (lower half of the screen) you beat a hasty retreat, stage right in THAT'S THE SPIRIT.

Trying to work out just what you need to pick up and what you can leave behind is an early problem. You can only carry six objects at once, and will have to face some tough decisions. The game requires a little more than you just having the correct object at the right place, however. A lot of objects have obvious uses, a bone for an awkward dog for example. But there are more difficult connections to make (that was a clue). More often than not the objects themselves will give you an indication as to how they can be used.

Similarly, the subways can be used to great advantage once you have learnt how to make them work. You have got plenty of time to solve these problems, your only difficulty is keeping your sanity level out of the red . . . so try not to tangle with the ghosts until you are suitably equipped, otherwise you may end up more ASHen than you already appear to be (that was another little clue). One further point for those who get well into the game, The Edge assure us that there IS a mouse. If you don't believe them, then you are looking in the wrong places.



CRITICISM

● **'I can't agree that the graphics are 3D as The Edge claim them to be, but having said that, they aren't too bad, except for the profusion of mucky colour clashes.** *Thats's The Spirit* **is an adventure, so the graphics are really a boon, as is the mode of play. Don't expect to finish this game is a couple of hours — even by adventure standards it takes some sussing out. All in all it's a very acceptable game, being witty and fairly easy to get into.'**

● *'I was a little apprehensive about playng this game, with some thirty control keys staring up at me. Most of the time, though, you only need the move left and right keys — the others are only used occasionally for picking up, using or examining objects etc. In some ways, this game has the same feel as* Dun Darach *although the graphics are not nearly as good. The similarity lies in having this bloke ambling around some scenery trying to get on in life, and having to solve a number of problems in order to do so. To begin with, I thought this was going to be an uncompelling game, but after five hours of solid play my curiosity wins, I want to find out how to get further on.'*

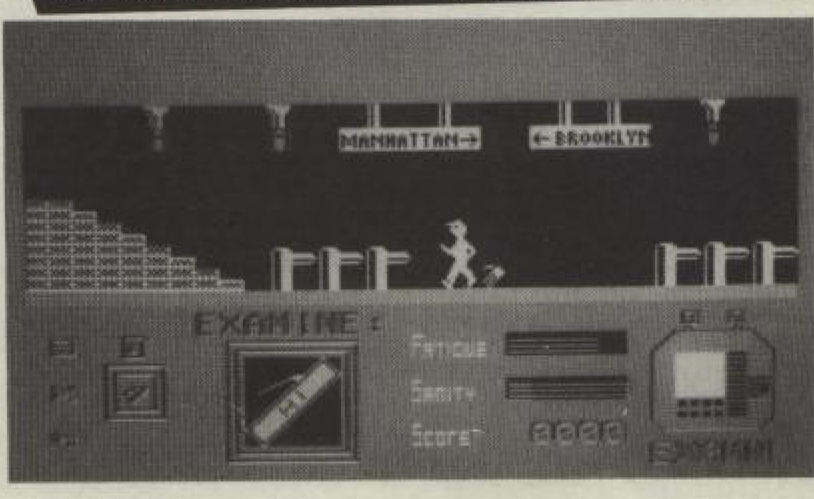
● 'This game is superb, I love the idea of the game and love playing it. An adventure that has full scale moving graphics with powerful yet easy to use input should not be missed. There are a lot of witty elements, the use of the 'swear' command induces panic for a while, and inputing 'C5' into the computer which appears in the game is also amusing. The keyboard overlay is very useful and makes the game a joy to play. I have a great deal of respect for adventure games but have always felt that their appeal was limited by the way they interacted with the player. The Edge have produced a game that adds to the trend of making adventures more accessible'.

COMMENTS

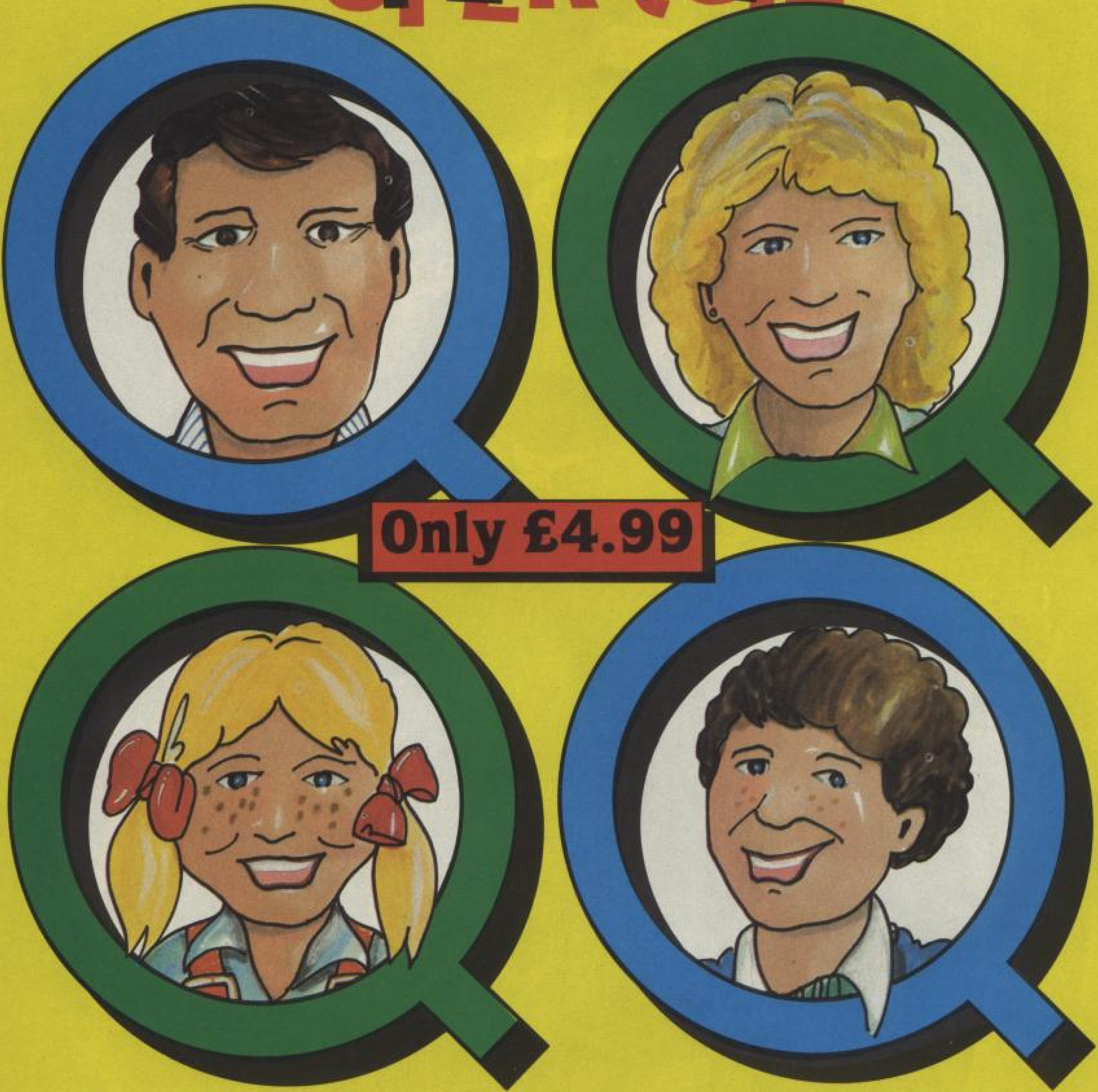
Control keys: as per overlay
Joystick: Protek and Kempston
Keyboard play: complex but a good aide memoir provided
Use of colour: lots used but plenty of clashes
Graphics: quite detailed and add much to the game
Sound: a good range of spot effects
Skill levels: one
Lives: one
Screens: N/A
General rating: well above average

Use of computer	**79%**
Graphics	**74%**
Playability	**82%**
Getting started	**60%**
Addictive qualities	**82%**
Value for money	**85%**
Overall	**82%**

With your pet QL in tow, it seems, you try to catch a train in THAT'S THE SPIRIT, a complex graphical adventure which requires you to use an overlay for your 'umble keyboard.



THE 1,000 QUESTION SUPERQUIZ



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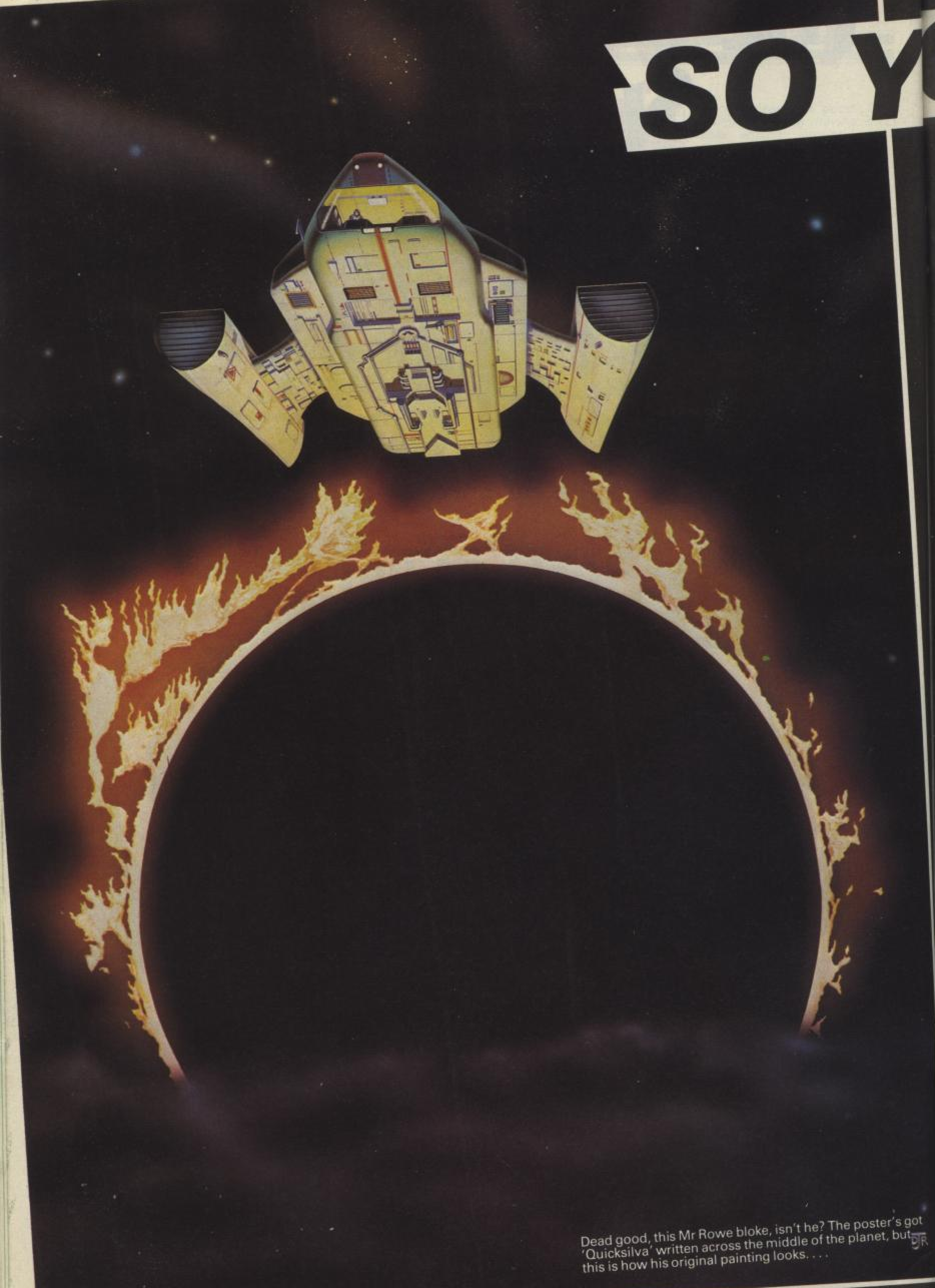
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SO YO



Dead good, this Mr Rowe bloke, isn't he? The poster's got 'Quicksilva' written across the middle of the planet, but this is how his original painting looks. . . .

YOU FANCY BEING A GAMELORD?

Crash Competition

HAVE YOU GOT THE RIGHT STUFF?

Think you have? Well, get it out quick, and enter the QUICKSILVA CHALLENGE!

Have your very own Hologram! A chance to win one of three expensivo prizos, or a signed poster by playing up and playing the game. . . .

A few weeks ago, we were the lucky recipients of a visit from **Paul Hargreaves**, the chap who wrote *Glass* for Quicksilva. Paul's quite a smart cookie — he wrote the game while he was still 15. *Glass* is his first machine code game. Not bad for a learner, eh? (He'd already got *Borzak* and *The Killing* under his belt before he started work on *Glass*, mind you, so he's not completely new to games-writing.)

Peter Holme from Argus Press Software also came along for the ride — well, if you're consigned to an office in London, the chance of a trip to Ludlow is not to be sneezed at. Over lunch, Peter thought it'd be a **G**ood **I**dea to have a Glass competition this issue, and your 'umble minion had to agree. (Not straight away, you understand, this Holmesy chap's got an expense account you know. . .)

Anyway, (***HIC!***) Quicksilva have specially commissioned three Holograms of the spaceship in *Glass*, which have been created by the team at **Holographix** — chums of Rich Shenfield, last month's On The Cover artist — and we'll be doing a feature on them next issue, lasers willing. These super 3D piccies are up for grabs as the top three prizes in this competition.

And to complete the On The Cover tie-in, we can also offer fifty **signed** copies of a very jolly poster David Rowe has produced for Quicksilva. They'll be sent out to the fifty runners up, delicately wrapped in a lovingly crafted cardboard mailing tube, specially ordered by Mail Order Aggie, so's you posters don't get crumpled on their way to you.

But enough of this rambling on . . . time for another Alka Seltzer . . . (***Burp! These expense account lunches!***) . . how do you enter? Easy. Each time you settle down to playing *Glass*, you end up with a ranking, based on your score. To begin with, these rankings aren't too flattering — there's half a dozen rude ones, including *Terminal Wally*, *Galactic Dustman*, *Commodore Owner* (!), *Cosmic Cook*, and *Tax Inspector*.

As you get better at the game, however, you start to make progress to the highest rank attainable: GAME LORD. Starting with SPACE CADET, the first non-rude ranking, there are twelve more ranks to go through, before you become a Game Lord.

What you need to do, is play *Glass* (a lot!), get good at it, and note down all the rankings you can. The fifty three prizes will be awarded in order of merit, to the people who've got the highest rankings — and if you lot prove to be as good at playing games as your Minion told Holmesy you are, we'll just have to take a draw from a hatful of GAMELORDS' entries, won't we?

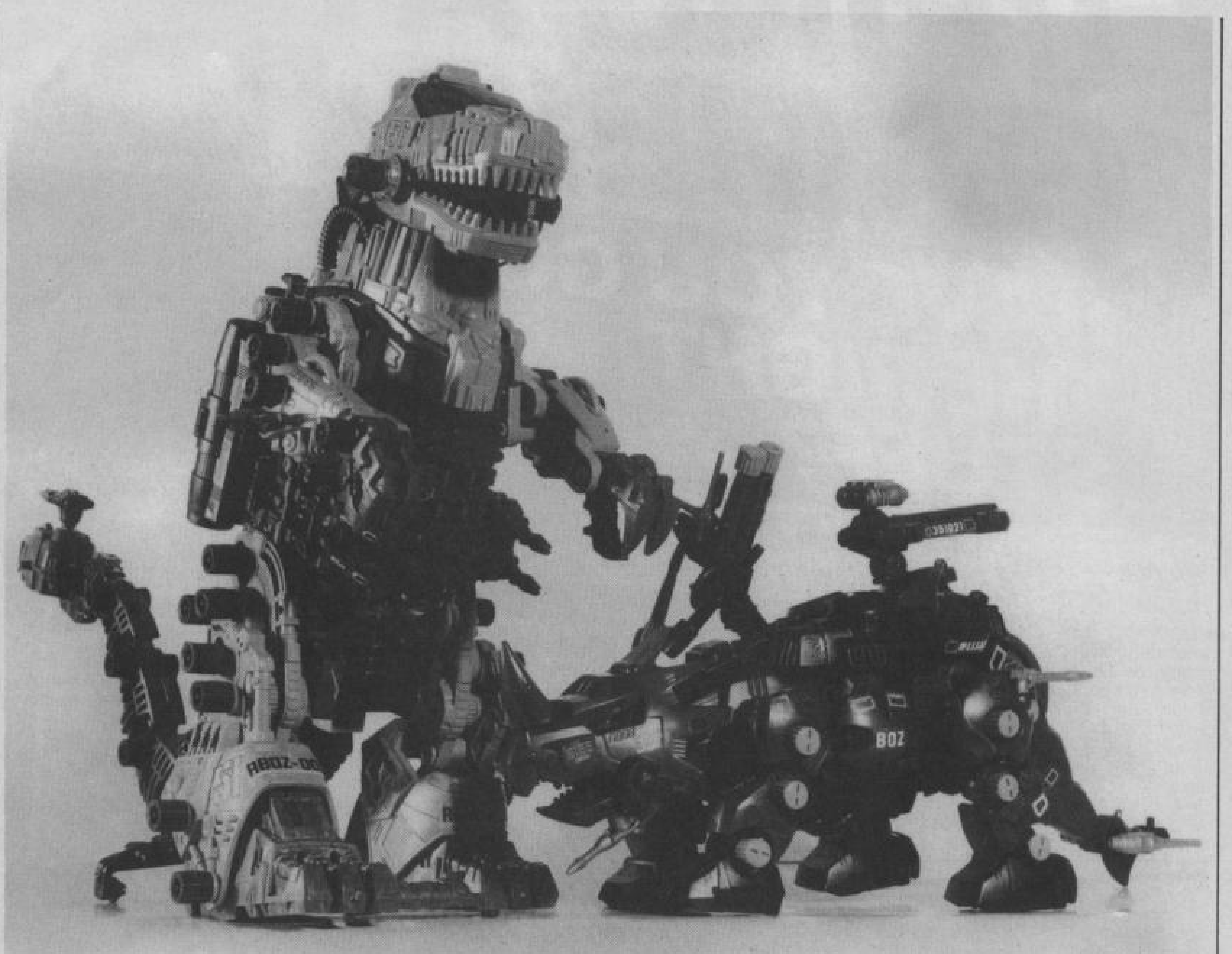
Best of luck, and get your entries into GAMELORD Competition, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB to arrive before 26th September, when we'll sort out 'oo wins wot.

Hooray Hologramssch! I've written the competisshun (Burp!). Can I go home Now, pleashe?



'Keep moving on the sheets with moving droids', was one piece of advice Paul Hargreaves passed on for your benefit — should come in handy on your journey towards GAME LORD status. He also said it's best to go through the columns screen as slowly as you can, until you get the hang of it; and reminded folks not to keep blasting away when the spaceship comes onto the screen, but to concentrate on single shots. Nice, helpful chap eh? Could do with a few more of his sort hereabouts, I can tell you. I keep saying the life of a Competition Minion's not easy, and now I've said it in a picture caption too . . . . . . (Gerroutofit — ***ED****).*

CAN I PLAY WITH YOUR ZOID . . .?



The CRASH Software Editor, Jeremy Spencer, seizes the opportunity to spend a day with The Electronic Pencil Company, during which he learns about their work on The Fourth Protocol *and gets a bad case of Zoids.*

I could scarcely contain my excitement when two attractive packages arrived at CRASH Towers; they rattled beautifully. Sadly, one was addressed to Mr Roger Kean, the other to our very own Mr Graeme Kidd. I can't deny that I was tempted to scrape a little wrapping off have a peek.

Just as my fingers found a hold on the sellotape, in stomped Graeme. It's not that he's an aggressive sort, but his newly shaved head and gleaming Doc Martin boots lend him a somewhat menacing air. I replaced the box, retreated to my desk and peered out from behind my monitor.

I watched as Graeme peeled off the wrapping and cast its contents onto his already muddled desk: he had got a **Zoid**. Sounds nasty I know, but a Zoid is in fact something that you would be grateful to catch. *I* would be. Graeme opened the carton and stared bewildered at the pile of components it contained. He ungraciously refused my eager offer to help him build the thing, but did allow me a peek at the picture on the box.

This Zoid was **Red Horn The Terrible**, an powerful looking robotic monster, bristling with guns and armour. I could see that here was an awesome toy, a toy to fire the imagination. I sat down, sucked my thumb and dreamt of Zoids: Zoids at war, fighting each other for the domination of some wretched planet — what a game this would make.

Having failed to get my hands on either Roger or Graeme's Zoid, I resigned to sulking in the corner. Soon, Roger took pity on me. He explained that since he was just **too** busy playing with his Zoid, perhaps I would like to pop off down to London and have a chat to the team writing the Zoid game? What a question! . . . a chance to meet the men who would breathe life into these monsters, the men who would turn fantasy into a computer game — the men who may just have a spare Zoid or two.

Hastily I scribbled down the address of the meeting place — an Italian cafe with a strange name, just off Cambridge Circus in London. I turned and grabbed the photo-chemical image-storage device and made for the Morgan before anyone had the chance to change their mind. The engine burst into life, and the car shot forward with a scream. (The scream was from the competitions editor who had been polishing the exhaust — silly minion.) I was on my way to a rendevous with **The Electronic Pencil Company**.

The EPC, as they are known to their friends, consist of Rupert Bowater, Benni Notaraianni and roughly half of Paul Norris (the other half of Paul is reading history at university). The fourth person present was Chris Fayers from **Martech**, the software house that had commissioned the Zoid game. Faced with the opportunity of meeting the team responsible for putting together *The Fourth Protocol* I couldn't resist asking a couple of questions about it. Like, for example, how they had come to do it and, what was the solution?

It was obvious that I would have to spend some time getting to know these guys before they would spill the beans, so I squeezed myself onto a seat behind one of the tables and ordered a round of coffee.

Rupert is a tall and dashing



Round the table from left to right: Paul, Rupert, Benni and Chris. Centre stage are the Zoids, who have been tempted out of their polythene sanctuary by the prospect of a sarni. The white stuff on the table is the sugar that led to the eviction.

chap who speaks in a voice that is well matched to his name. At university, while reading Geography, he had had a very bad experience with a computer and a punched card reader. He decided that he never wanted to speak to a computer again, never mind feed it punched cards, even punched cards in the wrong order. However, after finishing a sociology course he developed an interest in the brain's visual system and since a great deal of the more interesting work in that field involved building computer simulations, he was forced to talk to a computer again. Second time around, he found he had a capacity to cope with computers and their funny little ways. After leaving University Rupert decided that he really could fancy a computer after all, it was simply a matter of finding the right type. He applied for a job in the business world.

One of his application forms ended up at **Thorn** where it began to journey from department to department ending up, eventually, in the Computer Games Division. Here Rupert met Paul and Benni, and they began working as a team, producing games software for the Texas Instruments machine. After spending some time wining and dining the TI Rupert, Paul and Benni got to know it really rather well. They produced three games destined for cartridges: *River Rescue*, *Sub Commander* and *Computer War*.

Unfortunately, due to circumstances well out of their reach none of their games ever reached the marketplace. Although the trio had been a little late in turning out the final products, a much greater delay was caused by the company responsible for producing the ROM chips for the cartridges. At this time the TI was beginning to vanish from the Face of the Earth, so Thorn decided not to market the games but to recoup their losses by other means. The net result was the software industry's first chip hillock, containing the three late games — some 30,000 chips large.

After the TI fiasco, Thorn decided to create an IBM team. Our heroes spent three months trying to persuade the powers that be that they did not want to be on such a thing. Benni stayed, while Paul and Rupert moved onto programming Commodores. The two releases of that era, under the *Creative Sparks* label, were *Java Jim* by Rupert and *Ice Palace* by Paul. Benni was beginning to reflect on his short post-university life, spent writing diagnostic programs for cashpoint machines. Taking stock of his situation, he decided that life could be better on the outside. So, at Easter last year Benni left Thorn to set up The Electronic Pencil Company with John Wilson.

Paul was the next to leave Thorn. He went to read history at university, which he's still doing. That left Rupert, who was made redundant in November of last year — he was the only one of the three to collect redundancy loot. Benni had been out in the world eight months at this stage, and their agent, Jackie Lyons, organised a contract with Hutchinson for the production of *The Fourth Protocol*. Hutchinson wanted a demonstration for the Frankfurt fair. All that ECP had been been given was a plot for a game that was, to all intents and purposes, a very standard text input adventure game. Benni wanted to do something different, so he developed the idea of the windows and icons. His ideas were well received at the Frankfurt fair.

Some of the other ideas that had been incorporated into the demo simply could not be put into the final version — the digitised photographs are a case in point, only one of them made it through in the end. By Christmas John Wilson had left ECP, so Rupert took his place, and they had to produce the finished game.

The approach that Benni and Rupert had used in *The Fourth Protocol* was outstanding because it was so fresh. Icons had been used before, but not to such effect. *The Fourth Protocol* was the first adventure game that I actually sat down and wanted to play. For me, the icon system neatly took away the tedium that I find prevalent in ordinary adventures.

As the members of EPC shared the opinion that it was no good having a games designer if he wasn't a programmer, they ended up doing much of the design work for the Hutchinson game — and they will be responsible for all the design work on the Zoid game. How else could they achieve the originality for which they strive, and attained with *The Fourth Protocol*?

Rupert voiced a very low opinion of games that copied existing programs or other authors' ideas and methods, proclaiming such practices to be immoral. Another point that they are all agreed upon is that the pursuit of technical excellence in a game can be a waste of time. Paul feels that 'technical brilliance is all well and good . . . but the most important lesson that I have learnt is never to lose sight of the final product'. He reached this conclusion after spending far too much time developing a superior scrolling routine for *Ice Palace* when a simple page scroll would not have detracted significantly from the overall effect of the complete game.

Rupert remembers spending hours and hours perfecting the masking that would allow an object in one of his earlier games to pass through a triangle without colour clash. 'Nobody even noticed let alone appreciated my efforts'. They did agree, however, that much was owed to authors who had invented new techniques which had combined to produce games that, as Chris observed '..two years ago people said were impossible'.

As a team two and a half persons strong, EPC are ready to face their next task, even though it means upgrading their underpowered and overworked Beeb. I was mildly surprised that they had managed to used an unexpanded Beeb for code development - it must take an age to compile and re-compile the source code. Rupert agreed, but insisted that since the compilation takes so long they tend to take a lot more care making sure that the code will work before putting it to the test: 'if you like, the inefficient system makes us produce more efficient code'. They have already decided that a second processor is needed. The only question remaining is, will it fit into Benni's flat?

At no stage during the conversation, not even when we all received a ticking off from the Italian waitress for using the



shop as an office, did my mind wander far from the plastic carrier bag at Benni's side. Peering over the lid and clearly anxious to escape its polythene confine was a Red Zoid, another Redhorn The Terrible, just like our own big Kidd's back at the Towers. Do Zoids like sandwiches? Perhaps. The only way to find out for sure was to try. I reached across the table and gingerly laid down my cheese and tomato on brown. It was working, Redhorn had caught the scent, he began ripping his way out of the bag, what a monster! He made a bee-line for the offering and was followed, to my delight, by a clockwork Serpent Zoid, and a battery powered Stegazoid. Now that the Zoids were out in the open it was time to talk about the game.

The idea to produce a game based on the new range of Zoid toys came from Martech, here represented by the ex taxi-cab business owner, and self taught computer nut Chris Fayers. Chris is no stranger to the computer games world having converted games to the MSX as well as developing software for some of the DK'tronics peripherals. Now that he has recently become a Martechean he will be responsible for the Spectrum conversion of the game. The alliance with **Tomy**, the purveyors of these beasts, promises to be a very worthwhile move for Martech as well as the EPC.

Rupert explained: 'the backup from Tomy has been marvellous, they are offering all kinds of help while managing not to impose silly conditions. Another advantage is that we hope to be getting a lot more Zoids, for development purposes only, naturally'. I did experience a slight twinge of jealousy. With over seventeen different types of Zoids to collect, these guys have something of a head start.

The design for the game is impressive; it is stamped with the quality that EPC work so hard at, originality. The action surrounds the planet Zoidos, a planet 'gripped by war'. Two factions are trying to gain control of the planet, and thus the source of Zoidal power. In the game, you must try to sieze this opportunity and, amidst the mayhem, take control yourself. Within the hold of your space craft you have the invincible Zoidzilla. With him you can land your ship and conquer the planet. At the last moment disaster strikes — your ship is attacked and destroyed, and you barely escape with your life. In the attack, Zoidzilla has been smashed into 12 pieces and scattered around the planet surface. If you can find the pieces and re-build Big Z then you may still achieve your aim.

The terrain on the planet varies widely, and you will be provided with a variety of Zoids, each of which is suited to the particular tasks you have to undertake. But you will still have to rely on your skill and judgment to destroy any local opposition that you may encounter. You must fight and destroy the enemy red Zoids, not only to preserve your own soul but also because your Zoid needs energy, energy that can only be taken from other Zoids.

A Zoid is a machine . . . well, sort of. A Zoid is a machine that is so complex that it is more than a mere machine. It is very nearly alive. This element of life is something that EPC intend that you should experience to the full when playing the game. When you take control of a Zoid in the game you are connected up via the neuro-emphatic reflex arc to the Zoid itself. The idea is that your mind should merge with that of the Zoid; what you experience will not simply be through a visi-screen in a cockpit but more through an 'eye' into the Zoid's own experiences. To be adept at control you must learn how to interpret the Zoid's sensations and experiences. Your own powers of thought must dominate, and control, Zoidthought. As the team puts it, 'Live the game. Become the machine'.

There is no doubt that what EPC have here is much more than a 3D arcade shoot em up. First, the idea of being able to represent information in terms of how the programmers think the Zoid would interpret it and then forcing the gamer to interpret those patterns opens vast new areas for fresh ideas and techniques. Secondly, the game will be divided up into elements; some tasks will primarily require arcade skills, while others will require strategic and/or adventure skills. Rupert's intention is that the game should bear more resemblance to a 'science fiction film than a computer game.' One final element EPC are toying with is the idea of restricting the level of information given by the instructions; in effect, if you want to command a Zoid you will just have to suss it out for yourself. That idea isn't so new as Paul pointed out, *Cauldron* was packaged in the same way.

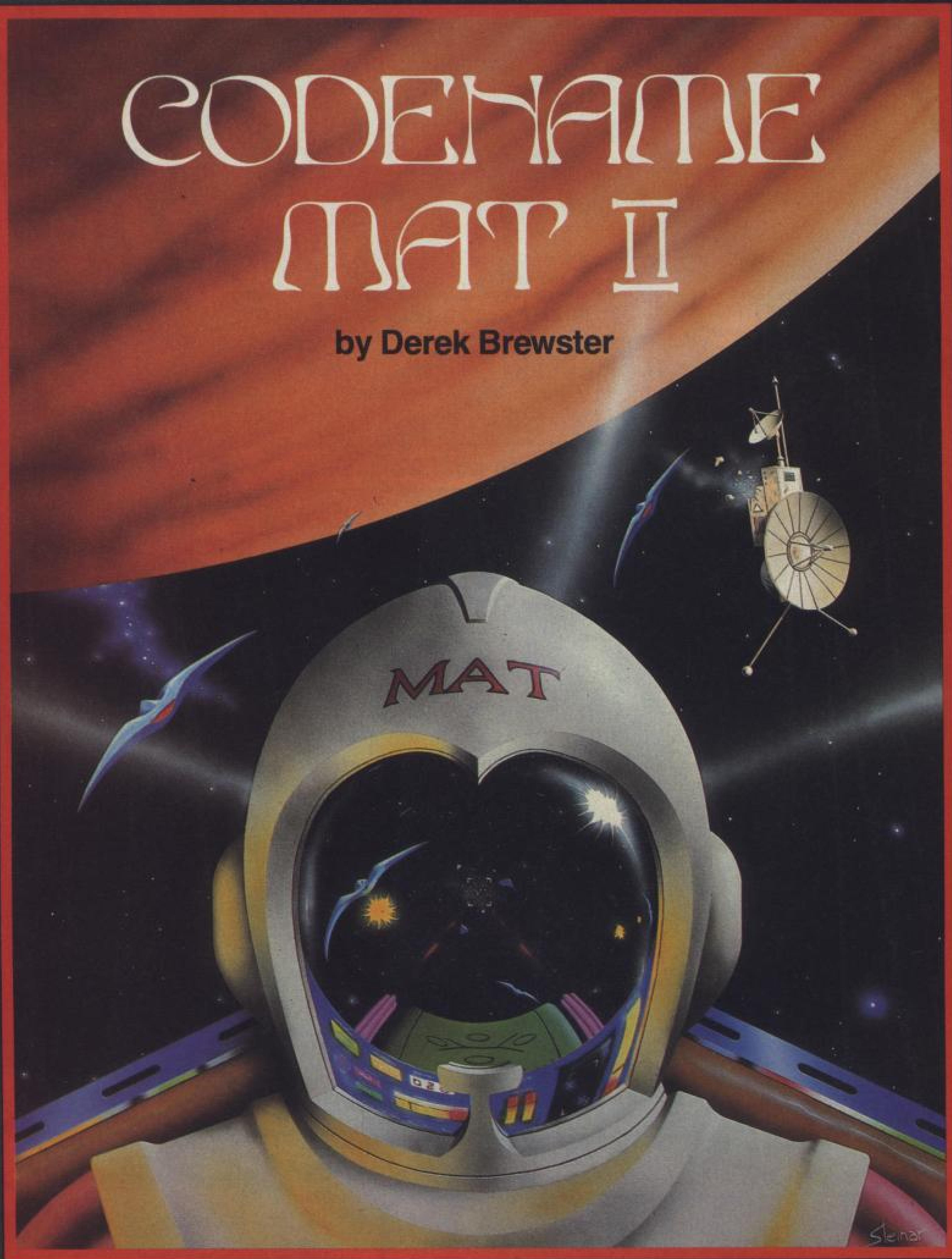
It was shortly after I had spread sugar across the table, in an attempt to provide the Zoids with a desert to make them feel more at home while I photographed them, that we got thrown out of the cafe. The rest of the interview had to be conducted in the street.

I wanted to know how long it would be before we could all be killing red Zoids at home. 'Not KILL', Rupert reprimanded me. 'No?' 'No, definitely not kill. Kill is a banned word, anything but kill . . . destroy, mutilate, incapacitate, put out of action, rend apart — even tear into strips, anything but kill'. Well that seemed fair enough, after all if someone had seen fit to ban one little word, it wasn't so unreasonable when there where so many more alternatives available. Rupert continued his discourse. 'You know toys with guns are banned in Germany? well fortunately even though Zoids are bristling with the things they aren't banned'. I wasn't surprised. What customs officer was going to walk up to Zoidzilla with a clipboard as his only means of defence and say 'Was denken Sie, Spielzeugwaffen sind hier nicht erlaubt, machen Sie dass Sie wegkommen' ('oi mate 'op it, no tooled up toys 'ere'!). 'No it isn't that', Rupert persisted, 'Zoids are fantasy toys and they don't count'.



As I travelled back to Ludlow, I toyed with a fantasy of my own. Maybe Graeme will let me play with his Zoid when I get home.

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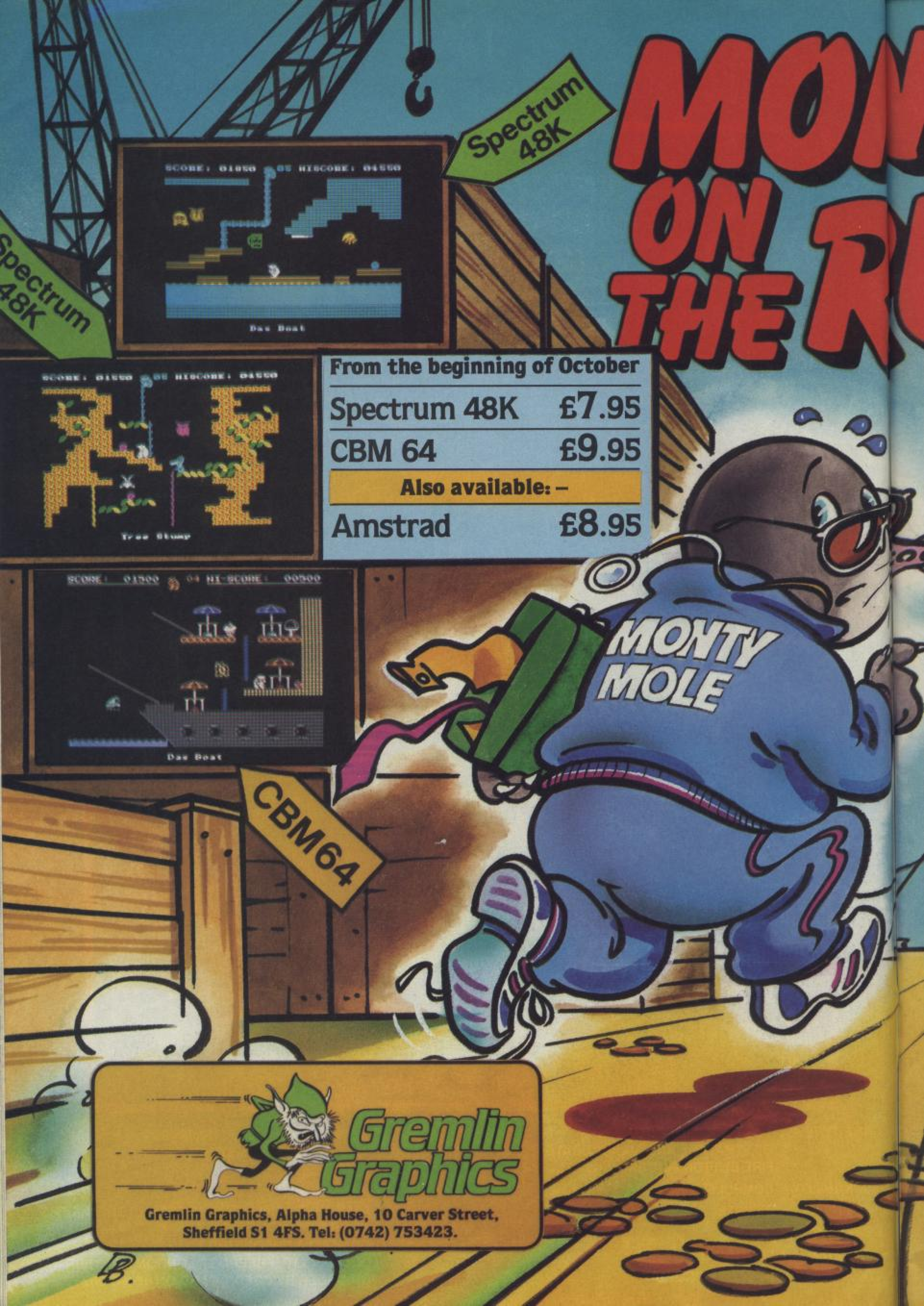
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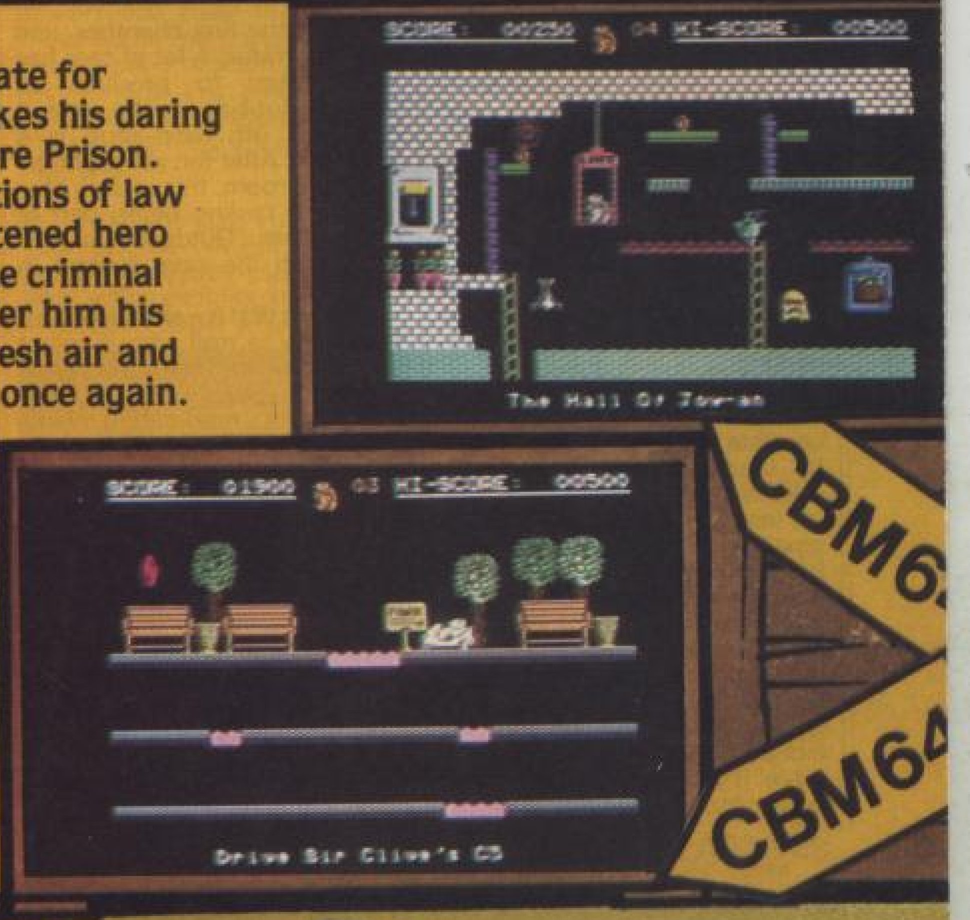
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At last he's free but can he make the cross-channel ferry on time?



Once again, we send the intrepid JOHN MINSON on a mission. This time, armed with pen, paper and posh suit, he goes to check out the state of play at The Edge, who are finishing off their new game, Fairlight.

COMING CLOSE TO THE EDGE

Right, they've finally done it! CRASH has driven me to the edge. **The Edge** software house that is, for a sneak preview of *Fairlight*, their soon-to-be released arcade adventure system. So, togged up in my ultra-trendy new suit — after all, The Edge are located in ultra-trendy Covent Garden — I follow the instructions and venture behind the green door (hang on, isn't that a song?).

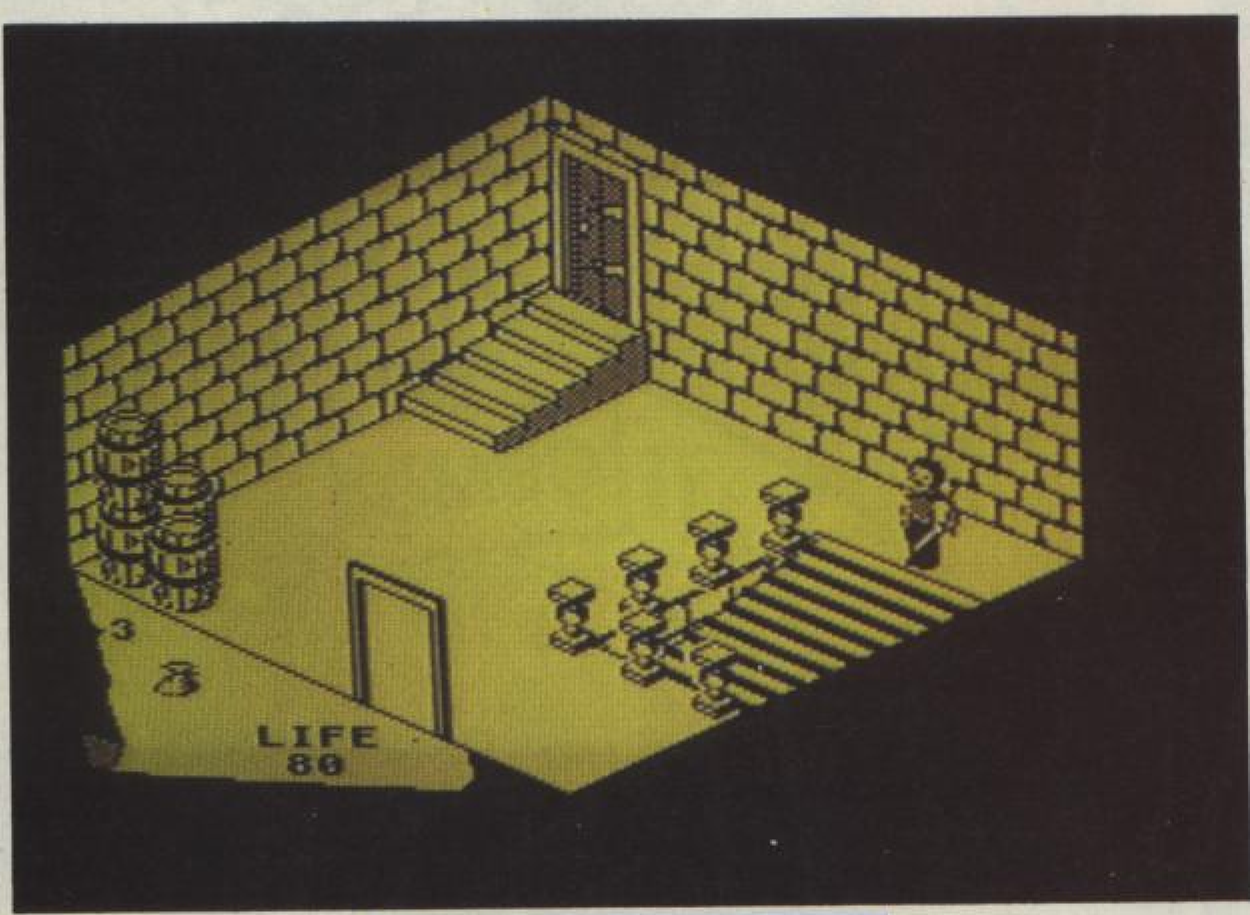
Bo Jangeborg (yes, he's from Sweden, if you were wondering, but thankfully his English is 10 to the power of infinity better than my Swedish) is already sitting behind a Spectrum equipped with disk drives. He's been working on *Fairlight* since March, from ten in the morning to eleven at night, sometimes sleeping at his micro. Such dedication!

When I arrive he's working on the as yet un-named hero. I suggest Graeme after our beloved Ed! The program isn't yet quite completed, and the cave system is away with someone else having the finishing touches added, but I am about to step into the land of *Fairlight*.

First a word about **Worldmaker**, though. This is the highly advanced graphics development system that lies at the heart of the current program, and which will be used to develop a whole series of adventures. Bo is understandably proud as it provides a *Quill*-style utility for creating games with an overhead perspective view, something like recent Ultimate games, but with a more realistic consistency.

We're joined by **Tim Langdell**, big man at The Edge, as Bo takes our hero walkabout. Certainly the settings are very attractive and the figure is suitably solid and well animated (yes, very much like Graeme). But it's when he begins to push tables around that I start to get impressed.

Worldmaker's main feature is that the worlds it creates are credible. Objects are governed by inertia and gravity, which means that a wooden table travels less far when pushed than a small key. This realism also runs to carrying objects. You can manage up to five of them in numbered 'pockets', but the crucial factor is weight. With a heavy barrel, you're unlikely to be able to manage much else without damaging yourself. In fact Bo hopes to include 'energy drain' if you carry heavy objects for too long in the final version.





Out of the first chamber, and into a corridor. A lot of care has been taken to produce an accurate-looking castle and it has paid off. Next stop is a dungeon. After the yellow of the previous room, this is dark blue — colour coding being part of the system. Outdoors is pale blue, with the cave system in red.

It's here that we encounter our first nasty, a troll who is intent on doing us in. The castle is well protected with guards and wraiths plus man-eating plants and wonderful semi-transparent bubbles which sap strength. There's an ingenious method of dealing with these but I've been sworn to secrecy or the gods of Bo's native Sweden will strike me with thunderbolts.

More wandering through the sixty screens of the castle (the absent caves provide a further twenty) and we pass through a lavish throne room, a courtyard and into a tower. Here we have to stack things to reach a trap door, something which is quite possible because DROP places objects in front of and not beneath you.

In keeping with its realism the castle can be mapped — and should be if you're to uncover all of its secrets. The combat system isn't yet completed, but any damage that the hero takes saps his life force, though this can be replenished with food.

With the tour of this desirable residence completed, I'm totally won over. Inevitably, because of the perspective viewpoint, people will compare the game with Ultimate products, but the similarity only exists on the shallowest level. *Fairlight* is much closer to a role playing game, and it's no surprise to find that this has been one of Bo's pastimes over the last seven years. He even devised his own system from which the *Fairlight* background stems, and it would be a bit of a shock if future releases from The Edge didn't delve deeper into the land.

Of course, there's a plot to your quest. You attempt to free a wizard by finding 'The Book of Light' which lies hidden somewhere in the complex of chambers. Bo promises 'a spectacular ending . . . rather a surprise' when the magician is reunited with his tome. But the most impressive thing as far as I'm concerned is the creation of such a believable world. 'You go into a room that feels real, rather than into a little puzzle room,' Bo says and Tim adds 'where it strays away from reality, it must have a touch of magic'.

Fairlight will appear on 20th August, I was told, and will be priced at £9.95, though I'm sure that with Bo's perfectionism he'll be making changes right up to the last minute. Already Worldmaker is being used to produce a space game which includes laser combat sequences. I don't think it is risking much to prophesy that this has pushed the arcade adventure over the edge into the realm of true graphic adventuring — and it should make a very big smash when it lands!

ROLAND'S RAT RACE

Producer: Ocean
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**

Roland Rat, TV AM's furry little superstar extraordinaire, has got problems.

It all started when Roland got up, late for work and not exactly feeling on top of the world. As if being late wasn't bad enough, Roly finds out that his rather decrepit car won't start. Disaster! Still, there's always the short cut through the London sewer system which Roly knows so well from his lurid past life as a city rat. He'll make it to the telly studios before nine o'clock, don't you worry.

Being late is, however, the least of his problems. A highly disreputable bunch of nasties have kidnapped Roly's friends. Yes, you've guessed it — Errol the hamster and Kevin the gerbil are in deep trouble.

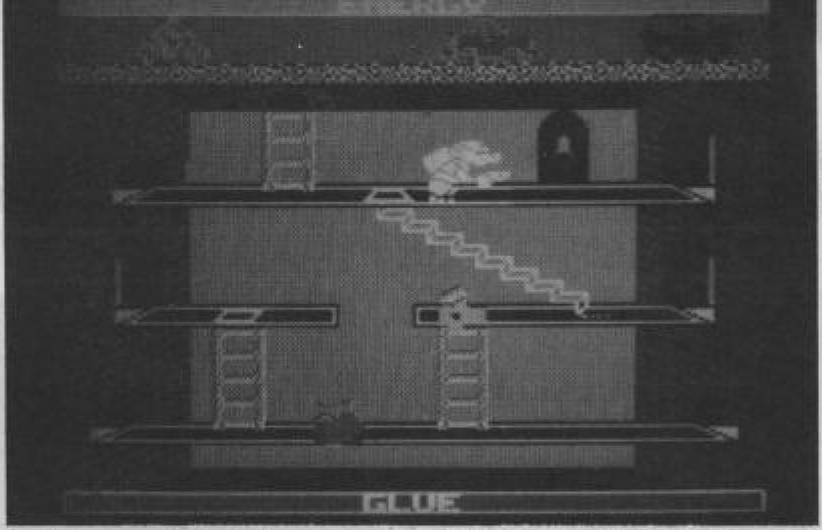
Out of the goodness of his heart, Roland decides to set out and rescue Errol and Kev. To do this he has to find the key to unlock the door to the nasties' secret hideout. However, before he can unlock the door, Roly has to actually assemble it! Pieces of the hideout door have been left lying around the sewer network — careless of the baddies, eh?

Unfortunately, due to the fact rats ain't that strong, Roly can only carry one bit of the door at a time. Whenever he collects a piece he has to fit it into place before he can pick up another. Worse still, there are pairs of wellies trotting around the place that weaken Roland each time he runs into them. **Fortunately** though, Roland is armed with his Instant Stic-O-Matic glue gun that can eject globs of glue with deadly accuracy, a piece of equipment that is definitely not to be sniffed at. It can be used to temporarily stop the wellies in their tracks — and can bring Roly himself to a halt with a badly aimed glob.

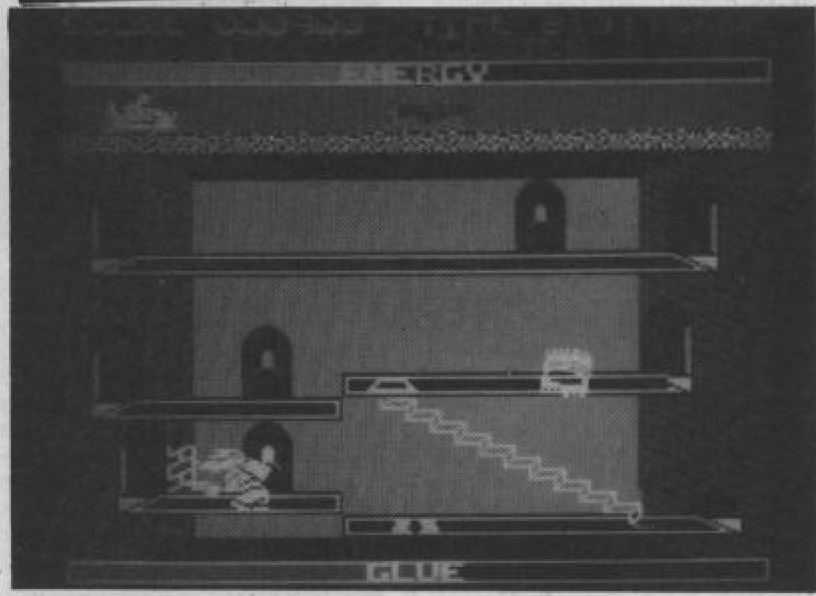
If our furry friend's energy should run out then it's curtains for him and his mates. Throughout the sewer there are apples and hamburgers which Roland can eat for extra energy, but these are in limited supply and must be eaten strategically. A few glue packs are also lying around conveniently, to boost Roly's supply.

Way down in the darker depths of the sewer there runs a regular train service which Roland can catch through timely use of his glue gun. If he's not careful though, he'll end up getting run over and lose a lot of energy in the process.

Once Roland's assembled the door and opened it to release his chum, only worms and electrically charged areas stand between him, his pals and freedom. But at this point Roly can't use his glue gun! When Errol and Kev have been saved, the trio are transported to the surface and the game starts over.



If Roly snuffs it in the sewers, would the Coroner's verdict be Sewercide? Down in the murky depths of London's waste disposal system in ROLAND RAT.



Is that a C5 zooming along topside? Glue and Energy are running low, as Roland seeks his chums in ROLAND RAT. What a delightful setting for a game, eh? The sewers of London. Doesn't anyone know that rats also live in ships?

CRITICISM

● **'This is one translation from Commodore to Sinclair that I feel hasn't quite worked. The graphics are occasionally quite indistinct and aren't as effective as those of the original. The gameplay isn't as good either. The lack of true sound or music doesn't help because this was one of the stronger points of the Commodore version. There isn't much to add other than the fact that *Roland's Rat Race* is quite a simplified arcade/adventure/platform game that is difficult to play and becomes repetitious and tiresome after a few games. And there's no high score facility!'**

● *'Here at last is the game that everybody who watches telly in the early hours can't help but know about. The first (and only I hope) game starring that loathsome creature Roland Rat seemed to me to be a bit of a let down. I found the game was uncompelling. The graphics are quite good but they get very muddled up due to the attribute problems. The speed with which new screens are displayed is too slow and looks as though it could have been written in BASIC. There are a few nice touches however, like the traffic overhead and the various types of food scattered around the sewers but these things don't make up for the unplayability of the game. I wouldn't strongly recommend this game to any hardened gamesplayer but I think it might appeal to younger Rat Fans.'*

● 'The theme of this game is not very original — get a certain person to a certain place by a set time, while avoiding the nasties. I still don't know why Roland is equipped with a glue gun of all things down the London drains, but never mind, it comes in quite useful. The game is a not-so-unusual platform game, but on a fairly large area. There is nothing really new on the graphics side, a bit of basic animation is about the biggest thrill graphically. Colour? Well perhaps a little more thought could have gone into it. In other words boooorrriiinnng. The game play isn't much better, there just doesn't seem to be enough going on to keep the interest from flagging. Overall I think that Ocean have got it all wrong this time, hopefully they won't next time.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Cursor, Kempston
Keyboard play: reasonably responsive
Use of colour: good but with some unpleasant clashes
Graphics: passable
Sound: weak
Skill levels: 1
Lives: in the form of an energy bar
Screens: around 32
General rating: nothing special

Use of computer	**69%**
Graphics	**70%**
Playability	**68%**
Getting started	**82%**
Addictive qualities	**73%**
Value for money	**65%**
Overall	**66%**

HOW THE RATINGS WORK

IMPORTANT CHANGE!!!

After more than a year of maintaining the CRASH rating system, we have made one important alteration. The **OVERALL** rating is **no longer calculated as a strict average of the previous 6 ratings.** Now each reviewer is independently allowed to judge the Overall worth of a game as a **separate rating**. We hope this will help overcome some of the inconsistencies which readers have noted in the past.

OVERALL PERCENTAGE is now a separate and distinct rating. ALL ratings are an average of three reviewers' opinions.

Under 30% — a waste of time
31-40% — generally poor but may appeal to some
41-50% — below average to average
51-55% — reasonable average if game type enjoyed
56-60% — above average to good
61-70% — good on most counts, generally recommended
71-80% — very good, recommended
81-89% — excellent
Above 90% — a CRASH Smash, words fail. . . .

POKER

Producer: Ducksoft
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Tom Pinone**

Not one of the great social arts, Poker, but you never know where the skill could come in handy. If nothing else, this program could help you to understand all the odd phrases that punctuate the gun fights in Westerns.

Judging by the characters that join you at the gaming table Ducksoft's *Poker* is set in a very sleazy Western bar. One of the major elements of Poker, the card game, is the power of bluff, by which you fool everybody else into thinking that the hand you hold is better, or worse, than they expect it to be. Duckworth's version of poker introduces an element of bluff, as each character gets a short say while he does the business.

The game begins by asking you to input your name. Next, you are introduced to the rest of the card school. Matt Dillon, The Mayor, Black Jake and on this side we've got Billy the Kid, Doc Holliday and Joshua Smith. Molly the barmaid seems to have a soft spot for you because if you are ever stuck, and have no idea how to play your hand, you can always ask her for some advice. As you make your way past Scott Joplin at the piano try and read the page of instructions, when they aren't looking, otherwise you won't fool any of them. Put your thousand bucks stake on the table and sit down.

Black Jake deals first; he places your cards in front of you and stacks the others underneath the row of names at the top of the screen (don't be fooled by the guy's courtesy). If you like, you can get the cards sorted into order and if you can't remember what to do you can get another peek at the rules. Watch carefully now as each player takes his turn to raise the stake, to see or to fold. Because you are only a beginner you can ask Moll for a tip.

When you have made your choice, look each of the other players right in the eyes as they make up their own minds. Watch Holliday whenever he asks for a beer — that means he's going to raise the stake. You can see the value of each player's bet on top of his pile of cards. 'Black Jake says rubbish and throws in his hand' . . . 'the Mayor checks his gun and raises'. If you stay in you get a chance to swap up to three cards, and if you aren't sure, just ask Moll and she'll help ya. You keep raising the pot until it's just you and Smith. You have two pairs, Queens and eights. You're ready to go all the way. When



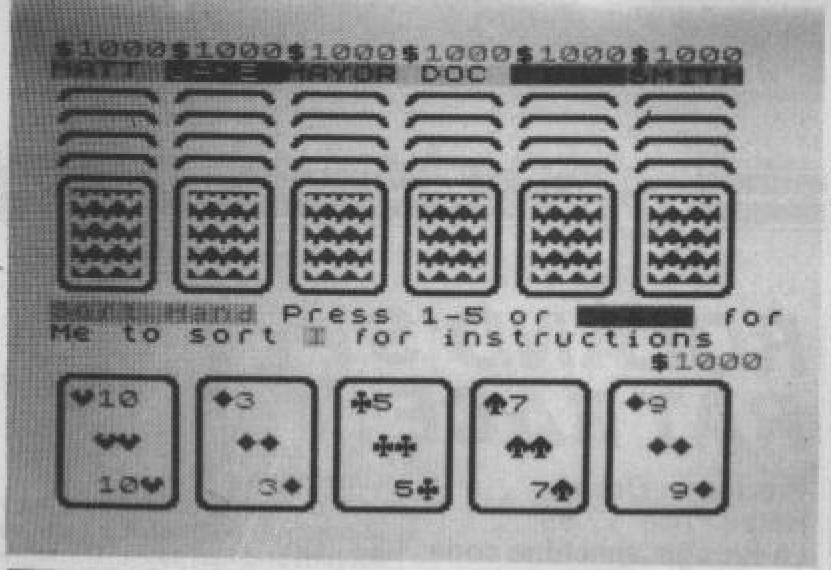
the pot reaches 180 bucks . . . Smith sees you and guess what? He pulls out a pair of Kings and a pair of Tens, he wasn't bluffing after all. You started with 1000 dollars and you're 80 bucks down already. But you can see the boys' loot on the table — you're not the only one to have lost an opening round. Sit back and watch the Doc deal another hand.

CRITICISM

● **'As the room fills with smoke and the Doc deals again I wonder, I have just fifty bucks left, can I stay in the game or should get Moll a drink? My first thought when I saw this game was, 'Oh not another Poker game', but I have to admit that this one is quite good. The graphics leave a little to be desired. The sound isn't too bad — nice rendition of 'The Entertainer' after each hand. I like the idea of trying to build up a personality for each of the players by giving them a few lines to say. I can't help thinking that 1000 dollars is a bit too much to start with — it's harder to get rid of than you would expect, though I enjoyed trying!**

● *'Can't say that I go for simulated card games a great deal but I think this one isn't too bad at all. The text output from the other players is a neat idea but the problem is that one tends to spend a lot of time waiting for them to repeat phrases and fit into a pattern, which of course they do. The main display was a bit un-stimulating, the cards look fine but everything else just looks so clinical. I had never understood poker but now I think I can come to terms with a poker player or two. Interesting.*

● 'This is one of the the best of the many poker simulations that I have seen. There is a helpful barmaid who will advise you whether it is good advice or not is for you to decide. The screen display as well as showing you your cards, reveals the current rate of betting and how much money your competitors have. All the rules of poker are followed (so I'm told . . . Me? . . . know the rules of Poker — never) so it is quite playable if you like this sort of game'.



You against six, in the POKER card school. Don't try to cheat in this version, 'cos the guys round the table have all got guns. Fortunately all people shoot off hereabouts, pardner, is their mouths.

COMMENTS

Control keys: as prompted
Joystick: N/A
Keyboard play: N/A
Use of colour: very basic
Graphics: good but they lack excitement
Sound: nice one Scott
Skill levels: N/A
Lives: N/A
Screens: N/A
General rating: a very god version of a well tried game

Use of computer	60%
Graphics	55%
Playability	67%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	65%
Value for money	58%
Overall	**63%**

CLUEDO

Producer: Leisure Genius
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Author: **various**

Professor Plum and his chums can now take a break from plodding round the cardboard corridors of Tudor Grange, moving from Billiard Room to Library in search of the murder weapon. They have all become stars of the small screen, courtesy of Leisure Genius, and now exist in pixel rather than plastic form. *Cluedo*, the computer game, is the second game produced by Leisure Genius under licence from Waddingtons — we looked at *Monopoly* last issue.

Six players can join in the hunt for the murderer — and if you're short on friends, the computer is quite happy to deputise for up to five players, each of which can play at one of three skill levels input at the start. Thoughtfully, Leisure Genius have allowed for people who don't have the luxury of a colour TV, and have provided an option in the initialisation menu which allows you to specify a set of graphics which don't get confusing on a black and white set. You can also choose whether or not you want each of the six characters to be introduced with a little theme tune at the start of their turn, and can specify the speed at which the computer moves the counters around the board, from a range of 0 to 9.

Once the game has been set up and players' names entered, the computer randomly selects the three murder cards — weapon, room and person — and removes them from the deck. The players each roll the die to determine the order of play, and the computer deals the remaining cards.

The screen contains a faithful representation of the board itself, viewed from above, and a vertical panel to the right of the board area is used to display a caricature of the player currently taking a turn, together with the menu of options available. Human players use the cursor keys to select options from the menus displayed and to plot their moves after a roll of the die, while the computer driven detectives cope automatically.

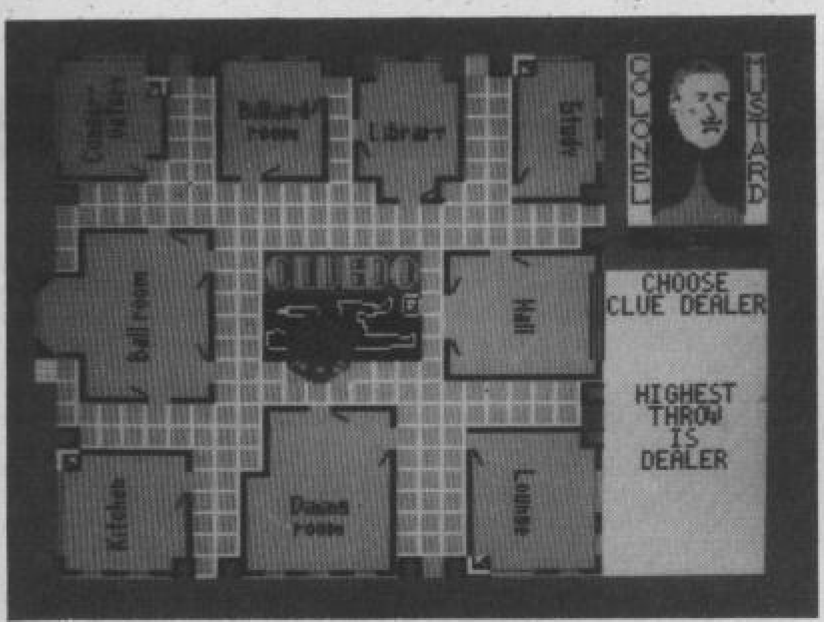
Play proper always starts with Miss Scarlett (Theme Tune: Gone with the Wind) and continues clockwise round the rest of the cast in the murder mystery.

As each player's turn comes round, the menu appears in the right hand portion of the screen and he or she can choose from 'Roll Dice, Notes, Clue Cards, Passage, Suggestion, Accusation and Next'.

'Roll Dice' is is achieved by pressing a key, whereupon a chunky red graphic representation of the real thing rolls from the bottom left hand corner of the screen towards the middle, settling to display the number of moves the player can make.

The game comes with a set of little printed 'Detective Notes' forms — just like the original — which can be used for eliminating suspects as the game progresses. Players can also make notes on the list of characters, rooms and weapons stored for them in the computer by accessing 'Notes' from the menu and highlighting entries on their list.

'Clue Cards' is simply an aide



Col Mustard's mustachio'd countenance glowers down, and play begins in CLUEDO. If there was a King Street, Ludlow on the board, my money would be on Roger Kean, with The Bundle of Magazines, in The Street. With the traffic warden as victim.

memoire, which displays the cards which have been dealt to a player, while 'Passage' allows the use of a secret passage. 'Next' is used to indicate the completion of a player's turn.

The 'Suggestion' option is, of course, essential to the progress of the game. Once you're in a room it's time to make a suggestion as to the identity of the murderer and the weapon, so you can try to eliminate cards held by the other players. Selecting 'Suggestion' alters the display on the main screen which changes to show a picture of the room in which the suggestion is being made. The player selects the person and weapon for the suggestion from sub menus in the player area, and their pictures are added to a little rogue's gallery at the bottom of the screen. The computer polls each player in turn, stopping at the first who holds a clue card corresponding to the room, person or weapon in the suggestion. The player who made the suggestion can then view the card held by the other detective, and thus eliminate a suspect, weapon or location.

The game requires a little co-operation if more than one human player is taking part — everyone else must look away when clue cards are being revealed after a suggestion. The program allows for this by masking the display until a key press has been made.

Once you're sure you've pinned down the perpetrator of the evil deed, the weapon and location, it's time to make an 'Accusation'. Get it right, and you've won, get it wrong and you're out of the game. Move over Hercule, it's Miss Scarlett, with the lead piping in the. . . .

CRITICISM

● 'Cluedo **on computer is pretty much the same as the board game. The main difference is that all of the work is done on screen, and of course you're playing the machine. When it come to ratings on addictivity etc, this really depends on whether you like board games. I felt that** Cluedo **was pretty good, but not really hyper brill.'**

● *'I'm not really a* Cluedo *fan, but with this one I didn't have much choice — a quick flick through the instruction book and I was away. The graphical ideas are similar to those used on* Monopoly *— the rolling of dice is just the same. Neat. On the whole an interesting simulation of the real thing, and for board game fans — Brilliant!'*

● 'Somehow, I always preferred *Monopoly* to *Cluedo* when they were both just board games, and this preference carries through to Leisure Genius' silicon implementations. It's good to be able to play on your own — but for family fun I think the solid version of the game has to win out. A well thought out conversion, however, with several neat touches. I particularly valued the option to turn off the theme tunes, which became very annoying after about three turns. Nicely put together: a must for every board game fan's software collection.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: cursor keys and ENTER
Joystick: You could . . .
Keyboard play: fine
Use of colour: well thought out, good
Graphics: faithfully done, neat idea for room interiors
Sound: annoying theme tunes, but you can turn them off
Skill levels: three available for computer's players
Lives: you get it right, or you get it wrong
Screens: main screen, then nine sub-screens, one for each room
General rating: another excellent transfer from Leisure Genius

Use of computer	77%
Graphics	80%
Playability	81%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	75%
Value for money	75%
Overall	**81%**

CHINESE PATIENCE

Producer: Atlantis
Memory required: **48K**
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **David Simon**

Whether or not the Chinese really do play this version of patience is irrelevant; David Simon, author of *Eights* which was voted best board/card/puzzle game in the 1984 CRASH Readers' Awards has produced another cunningly programmed card game in which one player pits wits with the Spectrum. The 'Chinese' version of patience follows the basic rules of one player patience, with a few twists and turns needed to make it into a competitive two-player game.

The rules are quite straightforward, and although they sound a bit complicated on paper they are very easy to pick up once you start playing.

The four aces are removed from the pack and dealt face up in a row. Four more cards are laid out, face up, to form a second row of cards. The remaining cards are dealt to the two players, who receive twenty two cards each, which are kept face down in a pile.

The player who starts, 'twists' a card from the top of his deck and places it face up on his discard pile. The object of the game is to get rid of all your cards first — which you do by moving cards from the top of your discard pile, placing them on one of the other nine piles of cards showing. The piles of cards which grow on top of the Aces follow suit and are added to in ascending order; the four piles which start with the other dealt cards follow the traditional pattern of patience, and grow in descending order in suits of alternate colours. You can also put a card on your opponent's discard pile, providing the card you add is in the same suit and is adjacent in value — in other words if his top card is a nine of hearts, you can add either the eight or ten of hearts to his stack.

Just to complicate matters a little further, while cards added to the Aces cannot be moved, you **can** move single cards from the end of the other four piles, adding them to the suits or to the top of your opponent's discard pile. A complete pile of cards can be moved from one descending order pile and added to the end of another, providing the sequence of alternating suits is maintained.

Each time a player moves a card from the top of his discard pile he can twist another card from his deck and, during a turn, a player keeps twisting and moving cards until no more can be moved. The first player to get rid of all his cards wins, and scores points according to how many cards are left in his opponent's hand.

Successful play requires close examination of all the cards on show, and careful thought — it's easy to finish your turn, hand over to the computer and then suddenly realise you missed something obvious. The computer plods through all the options open to it and grinds your mistake into your face.

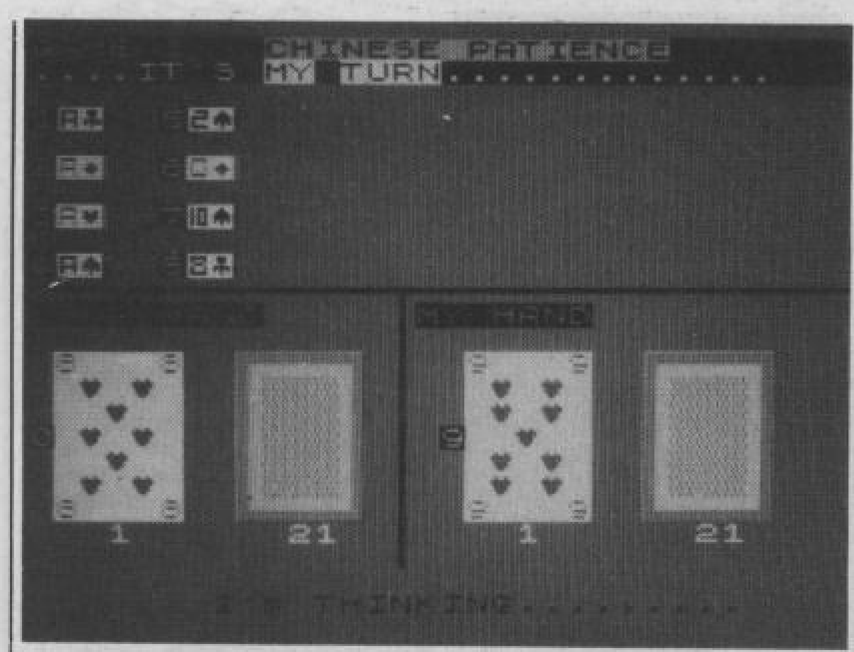
Running Mr Simon's software, the computer plays a near-perfect game, proving a worthy opponent. It also acts as tutor — if you observe the plays it makes carefully, you should be up to the same standard as the machine before long, only losing by your mistakes or on account of very unfavourable deals.

CRITICISM

● **'Computer card games are often less enthralling than the real thing.** *Chinese Patience*, for the money, is a neat and absorbing game which I found gently addictive. Concentration is vital, once you've picked up the rules. Having lost my first game 14 points down I was determined to get my own back. Playing best of five, I managed to leave the computer holding 19 cards in the second game, 10 in the third and 6 in the fourth. It's a compelling game — a pleasant way to while away a few hours now and again, trying to make sure you better the computer.'

● *'When I was given this game I was dreading playing it, let alone reviewing it as card conversions nearly always seem to be a flop for some reason. But I'm happy to say that this one isn't. I quite enjoyed playing it although I didn't have a chance of beating the computer. I think David Simon must have a talent for making potentially boring games good fun to play, as I had the same feeling about* Eights *when I played it first. The only thing which spoiled* Chinese Patience *a bit was the sound — I can't help thinking it might have been a better game if it had been quieter.'*

● 'I have played a very similar patience game to this with slightly more 'human' opponents, and think it compares favourably on the Spectrum. Its chief advantage being that you have a ready-made opponent who (which?) knows the game. The main disadvantages with



I'm Thinking . . . says the honlable Splectlum, while pondering the next move at the start of a new game of CHINESE PATIENCE. Velly cunning stuff it thinks, too.

having the Spectrum as an opponent are the time it takes to make its moves and the fact it doesn't miss your silly mistakes — as I discovered! On the whole, if you like playing patience, you should enjoy this one.'

COMMENTS

Control Keys: M to move card, T to twist, Z to end turn, 0-9 to specify pile, P to move a whole pile
Joystick: keyboard play only
Keyboard play: straightforward
Use of colour: plain and simple — fine for a card game
Graphics: Tidy, but nothing flash
Sound: a few tunes and prompts; repetitive
Skill levels: one
Lives: you win or lose!
Screens: one
General rating: a neat little card game, which doesn't break new ground, but is fun nevertheless

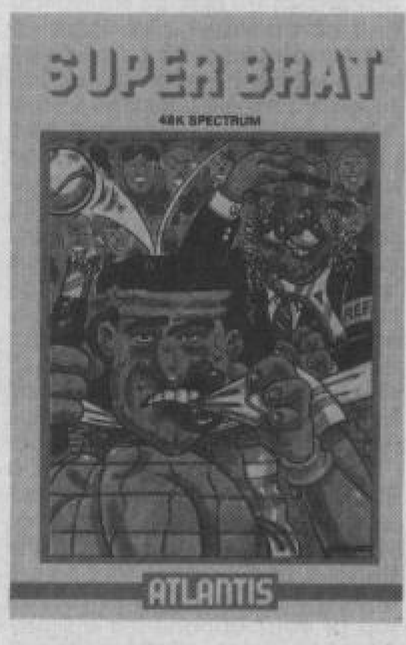
Use of Computer	62%
Graphics	64%
Playability	67%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	71%
Value for money	70%
Overall	**68%**

SUPER BRAT

Producer: Atlantis
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **T Adock**

The cover picture for this game shows a very irate tennis player eating a tennis ball. In the background there is a picture of the referee with a tennis racquet neatly placed around his neck. With a picture like that and a name like *Super Brat* the game seems to feature a well known tennis star, one who did not make Wimbledon this year. In fact *Super Brat* features tennis, and no tennis player in particular.

You view the game from the commentator's box, and your player is the one in the foreground. After entering your name you will be asked to select



a 3 or 5 set game. That done, it will be your turn to serve. Position your player by moving him left or right along the base line and then use the 'P' key to toss the ball up in the air. To hit the ball you simply press 'P' again but the direction of the serve depends on the delay between the first press and the second. For example, if you want the serve to go to the left then allow only a very short delay between presses, for the ball to go to the right you must allow a longer delay. The game will enforce the rules as laid down by the Lawn Tennis Association. Calls for net, footfault and the like are announced on the scoreboard. There are also two line judges and a net judge; if they report a fault you will see them raise a little hand.

The object of the game is to become the number one seed. To do this you must battle your way through three tournaments: the British, the European and World finals. Only then can you be allowed to act like Super Brat and still be applauded for it.

CRITICISM

● **'*Super Brat* is probably the only 3D tennis game to emerge since *Match Point*. However, the two games are very different from one another. The players in *Super Brat* are not mere stick men, and have form and colour — but they do move rather jerkily and, unlike *Match Point*, you can only move along the baseline. Generally the game is much less complex than *Match Point*. *Super Brat* is both playable and mildly addictive. So it does stand up rather well against *Match Point* but don't forget that that game is getting a bit long in the tooth.'**

● 'Super Brat *took a bit of getting used to. It took about five game before I became proficient at serving. You have no control over the power of your shot, only the direction, but that does help to keep game play simple. My only criticism is that the ball is too small. I needed a telescope to see it! Overall this is a pretty acceptable game.'*

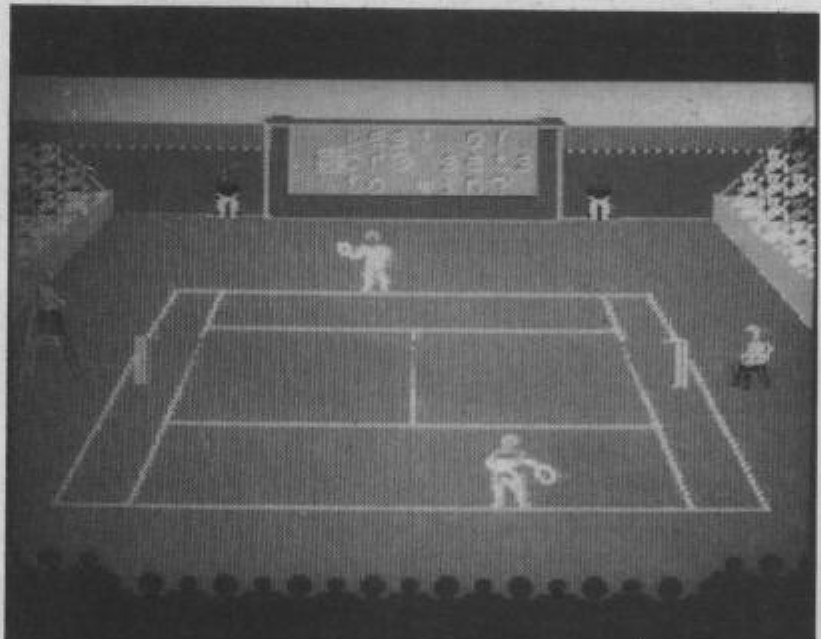
● 'I found this game to be pretty easy to get into, as it manages to avoid the sort of complex key operations normally associated with ball games. *Match Point* automatically changes between forehand and backhand, often at the most inconvenient time. *Super Brat*, being a little more unsophisticated, manages to do without such complexities to the advantage of game play. The graphics are colourful but not very detailed, I loved the player's pink legs/socks. My only regret was that the bright colours tended to obscure the ball. As tennis games go it's very acceptable for the money, but perhaps not for the purist.'

COMMENTS

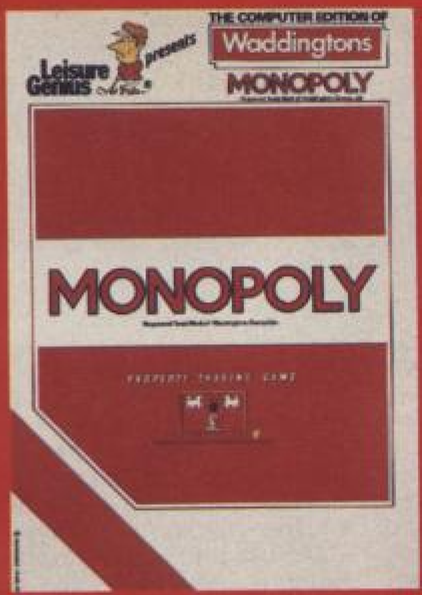
Control keys: 1/2 left/right, P to serve
Joystick: none
Keyboard play: fine
Use of colour: good but a bit garish
Graphics: acceptable
Sound: nasty tune, otherwise just spot effects
Skill levels: three
Lives: N/A
Screens: N/A
General rating: very good for the price

Use of computer	65%
Graphics	72%
Playability	70%
Getting started	67%
Addictive qualities	65%
Value for money	77%
Overall	**72%**

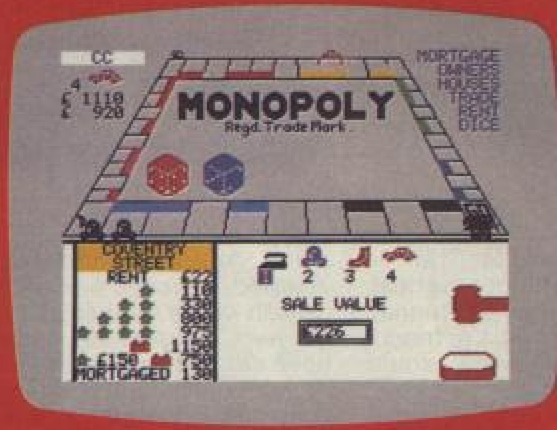
Number One court, setting up for the game in SUPER BRAT. But there aren't any strawberries — or cream for that matter. What's tennis coming to? If Henry the Eighth hadn't invented the game, where would the Scandanavian be today?

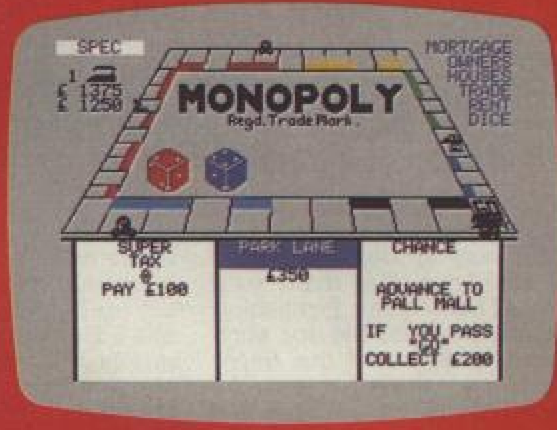


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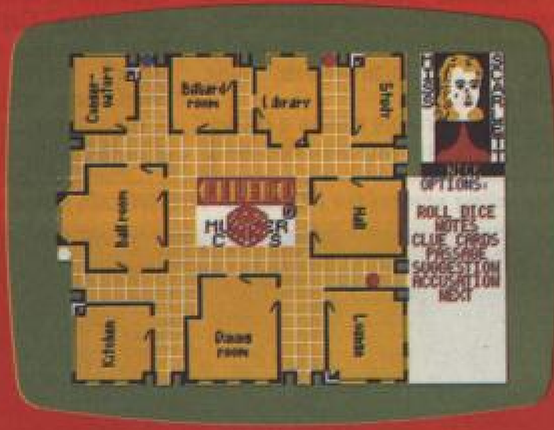


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CRA

DEVELOPMENTS DOWN IN THE DOCKLAND

In an office block in the middle of a windswept plaza in Liverpool's dockland, just across the way from the deserted and sorry-looking offices of Bug Byte, is the home of Odin. Not the big cheese Norse god, but the software house, born of Thor. And the software house which until recently had Mark Butler as a director.

Odin was brought to life by Paul McKenna, the main man behind **Thor** — the publishing company responsible for such games as *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Giant's Revenge*, and *The House That Jack Built*. Thor is a publishing company, rather than a programming company, concentrating on the marketing and distribution side of software, rather than on writing games. Towards the end of last year, when the ideas for *Nodes of Yesod* began to take shape, a new company was formed. Totally separate from Thor, it was set up to produce original software rather than publish it, and a team of programmers was assembled.

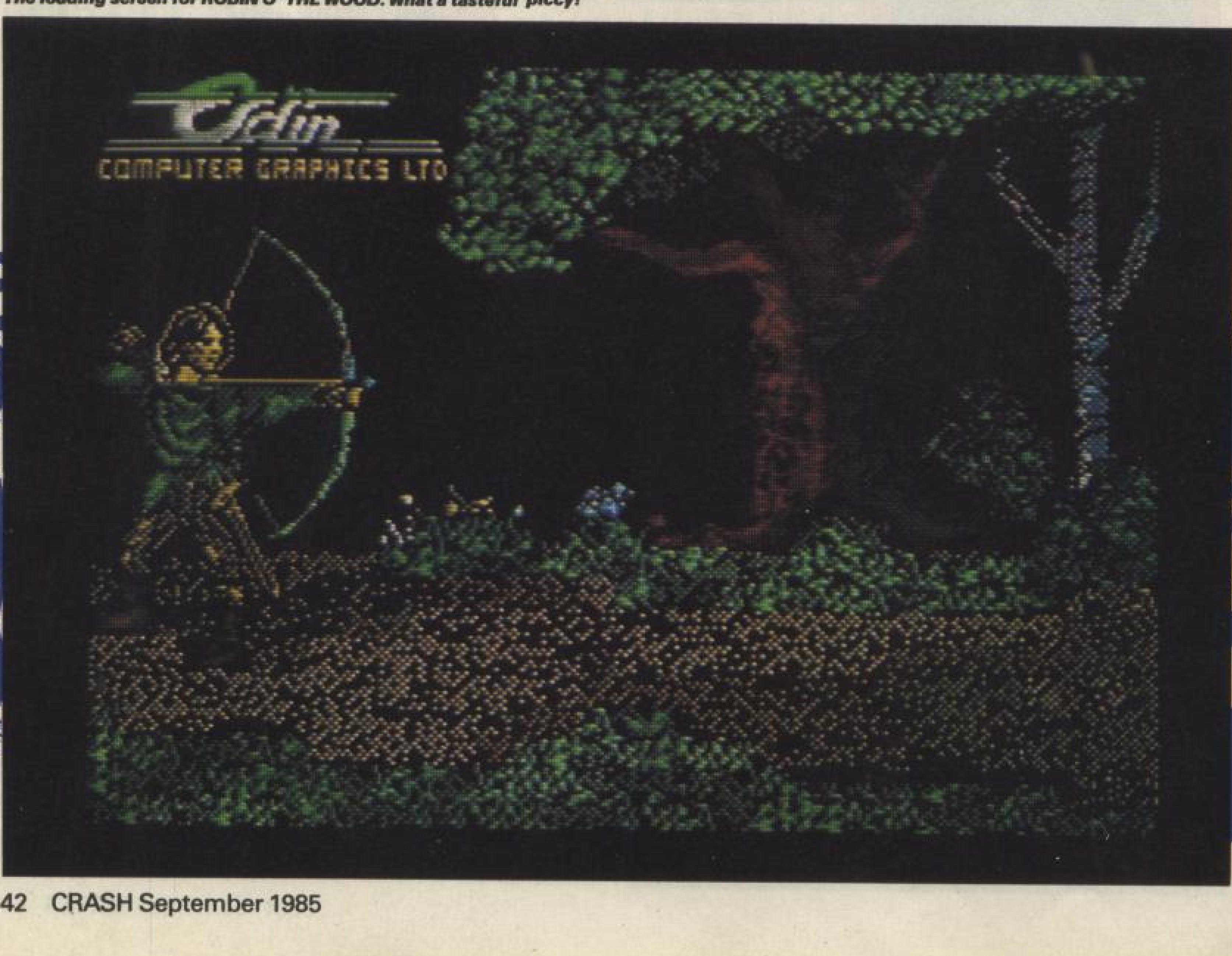
Mark Butler was made a director of Odin, having worked as a freelance consultant for Thor — but it wasn't long before the deal set up between Paul McKenna, Mark Butler and Mark's friend Heather Lamont went sour. Mark departed at Paul McKenna's insistence — and Paul is not best pleased with what went on. Something to do with having the Odin telephones disconnected, as a result of Mark's call to BT . . . what an Imagine-ation the lad has! But enough of that.

By February this year, work was well under way on *Nodes*, and the new company finally got its name. Odin. 'We could see that *Nodes* was going to be good from day one,' Paul McKenna explained, 'for instance there are 64 frames of animation just for that one character'. And his confidence was justified — *Nodes* was a CRASH Smash in the August Issue. One or two magazines, however, have commented that *Nodes of Yesod* was a cynical attempt to collect together all the best features of a range of games and package them together in one, best selling game. Paul McKenna is not impressed by this line of thought. 'I refute that . . . sure there are elements of other games in there', he argues, 'but it's rare for something to be totally original nowadays. There's nothing wrong with taking established ideas and implementing them better. It's a wise thing to do, when you think about it'.

We had to agree. *Nodes* was a worthy Smash, and the work that has gone into the graphics and animation, and the little details like the munching noise made by the mole, add up to a very slick package indeed. And judging by the screens under development for the C64 version of the game, our chums on ZZAP! should be well impressed when it arrives — the same attention has been paid to details, and full use has been made of the Commodore's musical capabilities. But enough of this C64 digression, back to the Spectrum.

Odin has got together a sound team of programming talent. Some from **Software Projects**, some from **Imagine** — and one fellow from an un-nameable company (v. hush hush!). Nodes is being converted, in house, for

The loading screen for ROBIN O' THE WOOD. What a tasteful piccy!





The Odin programming team, trying to Let It Be? Left to right: Paul Salmon, Robbie Tinman, Max B Count (aka Steve Wetherall), Stoo Fotheringam, Marc 'Wonga' Dawson, Colin Grunes and last, but not least, H G Buckett alias George Barnes. Stupid idea, really, asking the gang to list their own names.

A SCENE FROM THE FOREST



the Amstrad, C64 and MSX (!) while work is underway on the next release, *Robin O' the Wood*. The third Odin game, which should see the inside of computer shops during October, is to be called *Kimera*. We promised to keep quiet about *Kimera*, but let's say it will be a totally **novel** computer game. Nuff said.

Robin O' the Wood follows the legend of the famous green-clad folk-hero of Sherwood — the Saxon hero doing his bit against the Norman occupation forces. A sort of English Resistance. Odin's game is set in Sherwood Forest — Robin's home territory — and the evil Sheriff has arranged an archery contest with the aim of capturing or killing Robin, thereby ridding himself of a Lincoln Green thorn in his side, once and for all. The prize is the silver 'Shaft of Power', an engraved arrow which is part of the Saxon heritage and is more important to the Saxon people than the crown of their kingdom itself. The Sheriff knows that Robin will have no alternative but to attend the tournament and attempt to win the arrow, and he has filled the forest with Norman soldiers under order to shoot on sight. Robin has to find his way to the Sheriff's castle, so he can compete in the archery tournament.

Naturally, you play the part of Robin in the game, and have to find your way through the forest, collecting weapons and killing Normans, as you search for the Sheriff's castle. All is not sweetness and light, down in Sherwood. You don't start the game tooled up with a variety of weapons — they have to be acquired — and apart from little blue marauding Normans out to kill you, there are a number of hazards on your route to the castle. Tread on a hedgehog, for instance, and you are wounded and can't run so fast!

Without giving away too much of the game, the odds are not stacked totally against you . . . if you are injured in a fight with a Norman you will be incapacitated, but you can be healed if you visit the hermit; and a friendly Ent (remember the walking, talking trees in Lord of the Rings?) can be bribed to offer you a little assistance in finding the castle. And of course, there is a witch . . . who can be a hindrance, or a help, depending on what you have to offer her. And the traditional Robin role can be fulfilled by beating up the fat purple Bishop, who spends most of his time robbing the poor — duff him over, get his moneybags and give them to the Ent for redistribution to the poor.

When we visited Odin, the game was well under way, and with a bit of gentle arm twisting, we managed to persuade Paul Salmon — the artist working on the screens for the game — to let us take a couple of shots. A great deal of effort went into producing the pictures presented on these pages . . . Jeremy wielded the camera while Graeme and Paul took off their coats, stood on chairs and shielded the TV screen from the rays of Liverpool's setting sun. As can be seen, the effort was worthwhile. A great deal of care has gone into animating the characters in the game, and the routines for fighting are quite cunning — for instance, there's no point in trying to biff a Norman with your quarterstaff if he's across the other side of the screen, so you'll just have to shoot him with your bow and arrow — and if you've got one it'll be used automatically when you attack.

All in all, *Robin* promises to be an excellent game — look out for the full review in our October issue . . . meanwhile, you could have a go at mapping *Nodes of Yesod* and entering the Odin competition — you could be among the first people to have a copy of *Robin O' the Wood*!



The full Odin crew in the shadow of the Liver Building. Who said our photographer was original? Send him to Liverpool, and what does he come back with, eh, eh? Subtle stuff this.



The big red Ent, with his avian chum perched on his shoulder.

Robin, in possession of the Silver Arrow — will you be able to get this far?





It's been an exciting week! Just heard that EMAP and Sinclair User got an injunction granted to prevent the August CRASH going out on sale unless the spoof pages 123-126 were removed. Lord EMAP's fist has landed heavily. Still, it's business as usual . . .

Some good letters in this month with two broad categories predominating, first the Jeremy Connor letter backlash, and second the Robin Candy Playing Tips backlash. But having gone through everything, I was still impressed with the sheer fantasy and irrelevance of the first letter here, so it's Letter of the Month for . . .

FOLLOWING A YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Dear Manic Mangram,
I've got you sussed. Having noticed that your esteemed colleagues' physogs get published on a regular basis, whilst your visage remains conspicuous by its absence, I was interested to read your comment in the June issue.

'I hate being photographed, it's almost a phobia'

Oh please! The truth is out. The name Lloyd Mangram is a pseudonym, not to mention sounding like a kind of tropical fruit. If fact you are a WOMAN or my name isn't Dinky O'Hara. How did I discover your guilty secret, you may ask?

Hole in the ground out of which one draws water (RC 1985), at one time I considered the possibility that you were Lord Lucan, but soon the truth rang in my head like a great bell — or at least a trumpeting Spectrum . . . what if LM was really a woman?

Immediately, all the facts fell into place. I remember that you once mentioned living in Nigeria. Now as everyone knows, Nigeria is an African country, and significantly 'Africa' as a song, was a hit for a group called Toto. Coincidence? Perhaps. But Toto was the name of Dorothy's dog in The Wizard of Oz, so admit it Mangram, you **are** Dorothy.

Humble CRASH person by day, ruby-slippered adventuress by night. However, you are an adventuress with a teensy problemette: Yes Dorothy, I am familiar with your little dilemma of the heart — your relationship with Robin ('we're just good friends') Candy has sadly hit the rocks, and your lover's tiffs have become the reading material of tens of tens.

Why? Because of the attentions of Roger 'Heartbreaker' Kean, illustrious champion of justice in general, and the Spectrum in particular. Ol Rog' is so consumed with passion for you, Dorothy, that he could not prevent himself from inserting a 'groan' in your letters column (painful) in issue 17. So it seems you have a problem on your hands, no amount of toe-tapping can solve.

But a choice must be made, so which of these pillocks of society should you choose? Well, photographs of both Dash Ed and the Candyman were published in Crash No 17, and as Rob has teeth uncannily like those of the shark from Jaws (or at least Donny Osmond), Dash Ed looks to have the advantage.

After all, he can offer you money, power and would offer you no intellectual threat. But in all conscience I must propose that your true love is Oli. No, not Oli the erotic artist, but Oli the foal, your new dinky mascot. Then the course of true love would finally run smooth, and all thanks to little 'ol me . . . aah!
Dinky O'Hara, Lisburn

Great stuff, Dinky (or is it really Babs Carthorse, the internationally famous writer of romatic fiction)? As a matter of fact we have probably shared the same bookshop shelves, because YES — it's all true. Dorothy is in fact the pseudonym under which I concoct ruby-slippered adventuress novelettes for the languishing housewife and ultra-modern non-chauvinist househusband. How else do you think I could survive on my pitiful CRASH salary if it weren't for the royalty cheques from Pills and Boob? Ah, the silvery moonlight on sultry waters etc, etc . . .
Now come on guys, this is a computer magazine! How about some alien zapping!
LM

THE BUG BOX BITS

Some of the BUG BOX bits I've received this month are really excellent — and very funny. I particularly liked Lee Martin's **view of life in the CRASH offices (although I'm really not quite as ancient as Ronnie Reagan — honest). Another marvellous comic strip came in from** Paul Mallinson, **but I'm holding that over for a while to go into one of the Christmas issues because it is too good to try and fit into the space here. And, as I promised last month, there's the two follow-up cartoons from** Andrew Sanders **and** Richard Harrison.

THE JEREMY CONNOR BACKLASH

When I printed Jeremy Connor's *letter in issue 18 (July), I had no idea of how much reaction there would be, but I've received a veritable (look it up) flood of mail on the subject and, I have to say Jeremy, almost all of it horrified by your comments. Most were well reasoned arguments — here's a selection.*
LM

Dear Crash,
What does Jeremy Connor think he's talking about? The Signpost is great as it is. I like the 'gore', I mean it's art isn't it? Anyway, it's not in bright colour so you can't see all the blood (I can't anyway, am I colour blind?)
Alex Hoile, Rickmansworth, Herts

Of course it's art . . .
LM

Dear Crash,
'I am writing this letter to warn you of the terrible danger you are risking' (quoting Jeremy Connor in Issue 18) 'Having a look at my July issue of CRASH I feel you could be losing a great



deal of readers due to printing letters written by Jeremy Connor' (not quite quoting his letter).

Who does he think he is? He sends us a letter (us being CRASH and its sensible and faithful readers) giving a lecture on how horrific the pictures in CRASH are. It would be understandable if it was man killing man, but how many futuristic or prehistoric monsters do you see nowadays? How can these pictures upset somebody when they know full well that they are not and never will be true? Anyhow, all brainy and normal CRASH readers know that the pictures are linked with the adventure games in the tips and must therefore appreciate the unquestionable talent of the artist.

On the same point, the only children that are usually affected by 'violent pictures' are very young children who either have not learnt to read properly and wouldn't get CRASH, or wouldn't own a computer because they are too young. Any other young children who do buy CRASH must be aware of violence in the papers and especially on TV, so the pictures in CRASH will have little or no effect on children.

If slagging the pictures wasn't enough, he then went on to say to cut the cost of the mag, get rid of Robin Candy! This would be like taking away Big Ben from London, it's just not on. Robin is a pillar of CRASH (LM is the foundations, slurp, slurp) and getting rid of him, as LM said, would hardly decrease the price of CRASH.

Jeremy Connor's last point was really stupid (much more than the first two). Have you ever seen heads, that have just been severed from a body, that are smiling? I do wish Jeremy Connor would think things over before he writes again.
Richard Neve, Sandwich

I reckon I agree with your points here. Certainly the 'severed heads' of the Hall of Slime, appear to be very popular (whether or not you argue it has little to do with games hi-scores or not), so much so that I'm now getting photographs that have been carefully composed to fit in with the general air of gory mayhem. As for your comparison of RC and Big Ben — I'm not so sure, he's definitely as loud, but whether he's as accurate is another matter.
LM

Dear Crash
In answer to your plea to hear from us readers about Jeremy Connor's niggles, I think he is just creating a fuss to get his name on your pages. Can anyone be so gentle that he or she (my sister reads CRASH) cannot stand to look at pictures in a magazine without feeling ill? I would say not.

However, 'romantic' pictures of princesses being rescued would be quite nice to look at... if they were in a state of semi-nakedness!

The price, also, is fine. I would be willing to pay £1.50 for your magazine (please don't let this statement influence you at all).
Paul Myles, Midlothian

Perhaps if we were just providing you with pictures of princesses in the manner you suggest, we could probably charge you £1.50 — however, and despite this block of letters, computer games are what we're supposed to be talking about — strange how you can get sidetracked, isn't it?
LM

Dear Lloyd,
Forget the junk about how good your mag is (it's true, I know), and let's get straight down to business: I was so disgusted by Jeremy Connor's letter in Issue 18 that I have been moved to write a letter before I've finished reading CRASH. (Shock, horror).

In my humble opinion, Jeremy Connor is the sort of reader you can do without, or at least do without hearing from. His comments on the illustrations in Signpost are utterly stupid — the pictures are certainly not disgusting in the least, and they add to the atmosphere of the column. Notice, will you, that he doesn't complain about the gory descriptions of how you get bumped off in most adventures 'Your skull has been cleaved neatly in two' from *The Hobbit*, to name but one.

About the price, he should be pleased about the amount of entertainment he is getting for 95p. You can't even go to the cinema for 95p these days.

And what does he mean, cut Robin Candy's pages from the magazine to reduce the price? Robin's playing tips are an integral (LM's Big Word Dictionary) part of CRASH just as Angus' strategy column, Derek's adventure column, Oli's amazing artwork, Roger (which way is Mecca) Kean's editorial and, of course, Lloyd's letters. Once you start cutting some sections out, the standard of the mag will plummet.

Yes, Mr Connor's readership would probably be welcomed by the Mary Whitehouse fan club journal.
Steve Holt, Norwich

I did make the point in answer to Jeremy's letter, that adventure games often have gory descriptions in them, or are designed to conjure up a bloody incident, an awful lot of fiction does do this. CRASH has grown over the months to become what it is, and all the people involved in producing it every month add to its flavour. You're quite right, the loss of any part would be damaging — even Robin (well, almost).

Dear Lloyd,
I have just about managed to stop laughing over Jeremy Connor's letter in the July issue. So CRASH is now overflowing with disgusting pictures of carnage and gratuitous violence. Probably Mr Connor is also one of those plonkers wanting to ban Tom and Jerry cartoons because they are too violent.

I can remember the sort of comics I used to read as a young lad. Those I enjoyed the most were full of blood and guts, war stories or horrible alien monsters. In my view it is only escapism. Indeed it could be argued that they serve a necessary purpose, as a harmless outlet for our dominant primitive instincts for hunting and killing. Wow! Heavy!

I bet Mr Connor also objects to the cover painting. A tasteful study of a scantily clad girl and a bronzed young man done up in chains. What filth! Perhaps in future CRASH will be sold in sleazy back street sex shops or sent through the post in a plain wrapper.

If the pictures in the Hall of Slime are anything to go by, then I must be one of your oldest readers. At 30 years of age, I suppose I should be putting my Spectrum to better uses than just playing games. But I enjoy it, and there are times when I think it keeps me sane.
Ed Smith, Newcastle

There were some rumours (and some people did ring in to confirm) that the issue made the top shelf in some newsagents! Information to date suggests that this hasn't hindered sales at all, but come on, let's get back to computer games...
LM

Dear Sir Llloyd,
I AM WRITING SLOW BECAUSE I KNOW YOU CAN'T TYPE VERY FAST.

'I am writing this letter to warn you of the terrible danger you are risking'. CRASH issue 18, July 1985, Jeremy Connor's letter.

The terrible danger is that of making some readers sick! The letter sent in by the above pansy at first made me laugh. Upon reading for the second time, I realised the little twerp was serious! This was when a feeling of deep repulsion set in.

He called it 'constructive criticism'; more like what Mary Whitehouse wants! Perhaps whilst taking heed of his points you could change the name of the magazine to something less violent, like 'FLUMPH' for instance.

OH, while you're at it, the picture in the July Issue — I could have sworn the woman's armpit was visible!

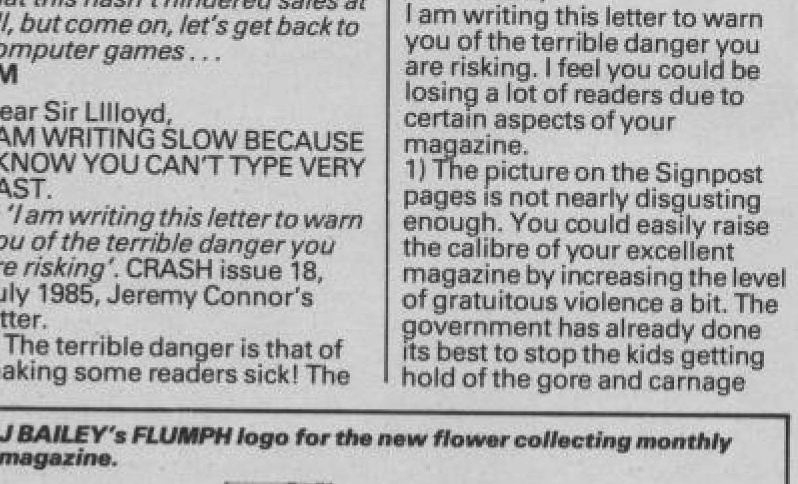
Oh yes, another point... please make sure the Olibugs comb their hair before O Frey draws them.

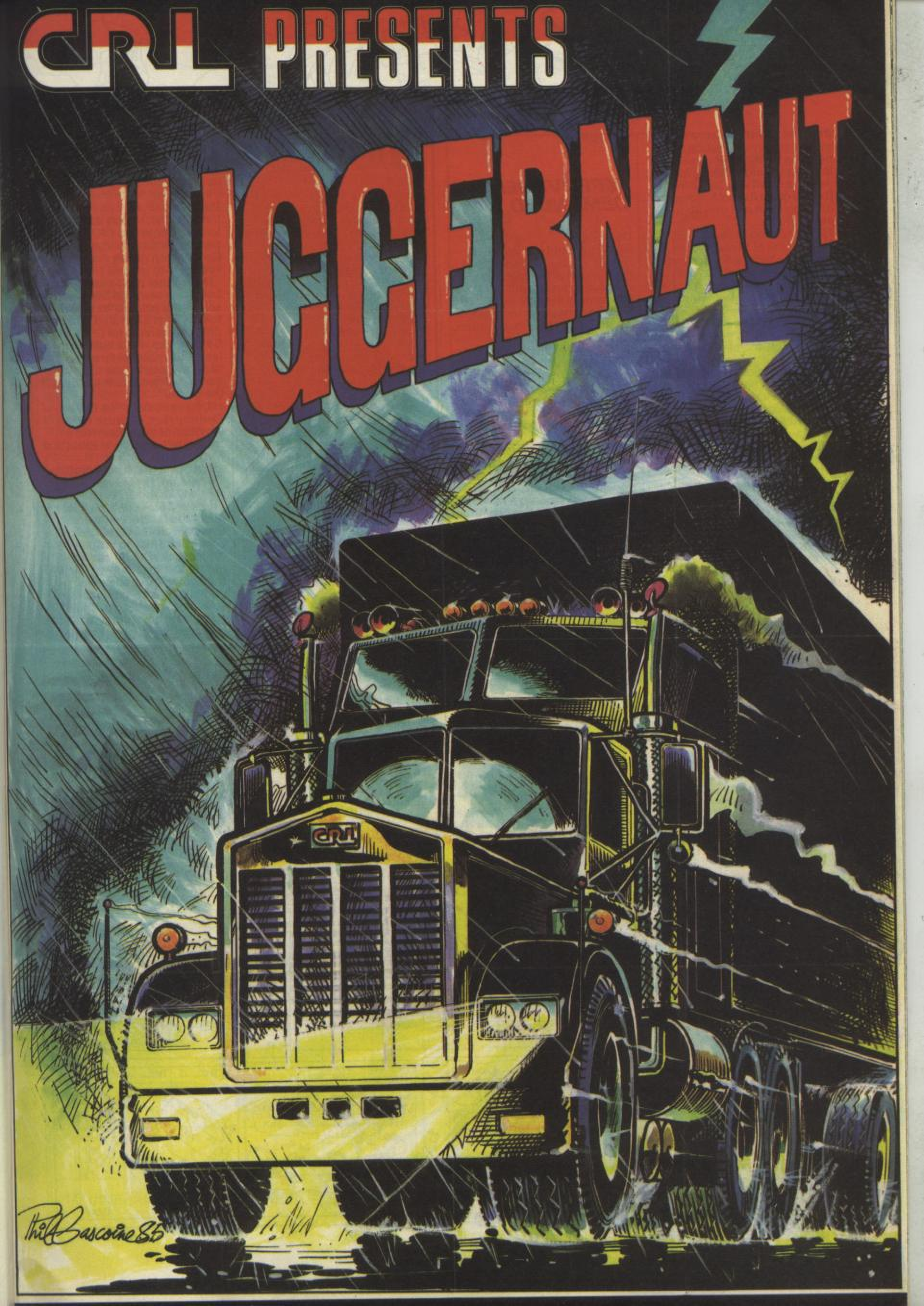
Please CRASH, take no notice whatsoever of J Connor's letter, else people will send in all sorts of demands, like 'change your artist' and 'review Acorn Electron games as well' or other such stupid ideas.
J Bailey, St Johns Wood

Now there's a great title for a mag — FLUMPH! It has a certain ring to it. I think you're being a bit harsh on poor Jeremy — one minute he's referred to as an amphibian creature, and the next he's turned into a flower (first feature in the new flower column perhaps)? Mr Bailey has kindly provided us with a logo for FLUMPH and I think it looks very nice indeed. You needn't worry about Robin Candy, because the only way we'll be dropping him is from the top of CRASH Towers. But back to computer games...
LM

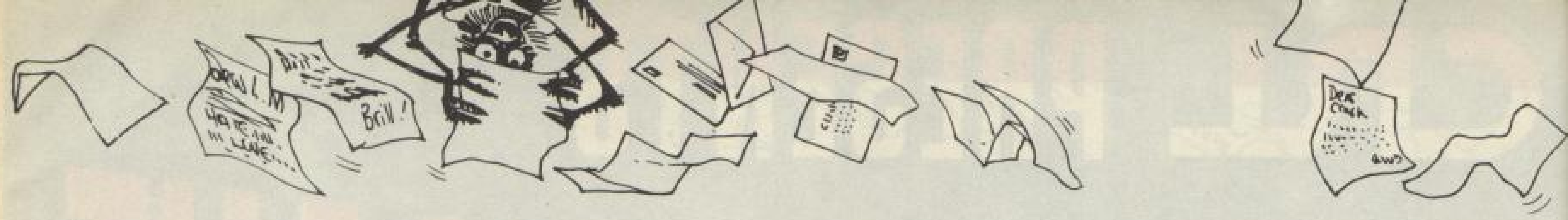
Dear Crash,
I am writing this letter to warn you of the terrible danger you are risking. I feel you could be losing a lot of readers due to certain aspects of your magazine.
1) The picture on the Signpost pages is not nearly disgusting enough. You could easily raise the calibre of your excellent magazine by increasing the level of gratuitous violence a bit. The government has already done its best to stop the kids getting hold of the gore and carnage

J BAILEY's FLUMPH logo for the new flower collecting monthly magazine.





CRL PRESENTS
JUGGERNAUT
CRL
Phil Gascoine 85



that they rightly deserve as free individuals in a free state by banning their horror movies. At least you could make up for this in some small way by giving them a good full colour dosage of flying flesh and mayhem every month.
2) Don't cut out Robin Candy.
3) Print Hall of Slime in Colour, and make it into a double spread depicting the detail the lucky individuals' heads being ripped from their bodies with full splatter effects.
4) I'm sure boring little prats like Jeremy Connor can avert their sensitive little eyes when they come to a nasty bit, or maybe they should stick to reading Enid Blyton books or better still go and live in Russia, where I'm sure there's absolutely no chance of anything unpleasant being available for small children to see.

Carry on the good work, and ignore the little fascists like Jeremy. I'm sure his mummy put him up to it anyway.
Stephen Cavalier, Much Wenlock, Shropshire

An amphibious, flowery, political thug . . . hmmm. Never mind Jeremy, just remember, there's always computer games to console you, and surely killing aliens in blinding blasts of anhilating laser fire is harmless enough.
LM

IMPROVEMENT DEMANDED

Dear Sir,
My 12 year old son is an avid reader of your magazine, and finds much of the material interesting and useful. However, concerning the July issue, I feel obliged to return to you the front cover. I trust that, on reflection, you will agree that the illustration is vulgar, even perverted. Our continued support of your publication is conditional upon an improvement in the tone of your artwork.
E A Jones, Yeovil

This letter came stapled together with the offending front page. As a matter of fact, I don't agree that the illustration was vulgar or perverted, but your comments have been passed onto Oliver Frey and I hope you'll find the next cover a vast improvement — that is if you were able to buy a copy from your newsagents after Lord EMAP and Sinclair User stamped on it and prevented its distribution.
LM

ON THE COVER . . .

Dear Lloyd,
Please could someone have a quiet word with Oliver Frey about his cover designs? On going into my local WH Smiths to buy the July edition of CRASH, I went straight to the computer magazines section but it was nowhere to be seen!

After some hunting around, I eventually found it in the euphemistically named 'General Interest' section. In other words it was in with the Playboys and Mayfairs!

I am not objecting to the picture — I thought it was great — but to avoid further confusion for newsagents, I feel that such pictures should be hidden away on the inner pages.
Matthew Fletcher, Gloucester

There we go, I told you someone had seen it on the wrong shelf. Still, having to stretch that high up every month will make you grow up big and strong — and tall.
LM

THE ROBIN CANDY BACKLASH

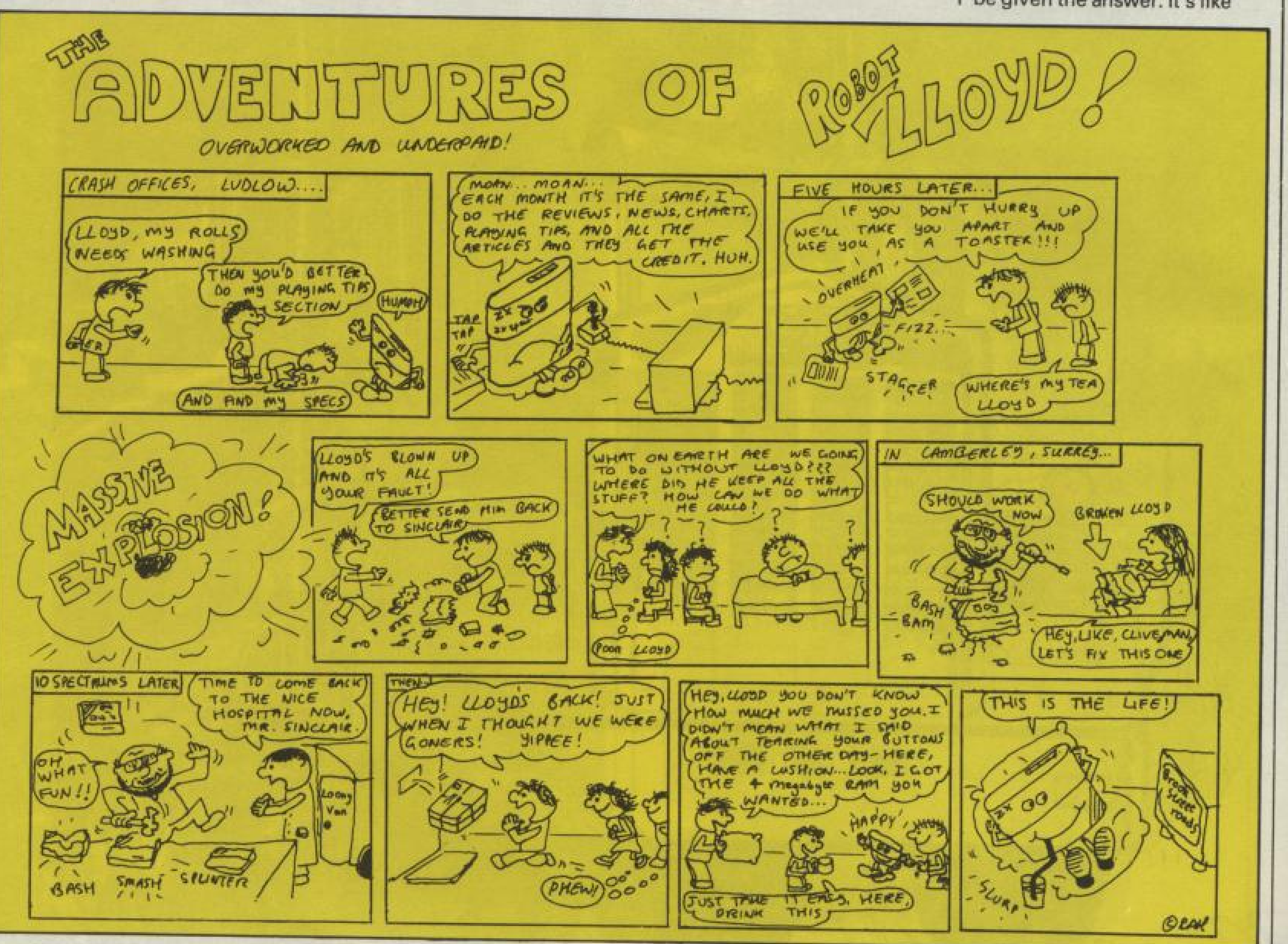
Dear Sir,
I'm sick of it. I won't stand it any longer. Could you CRASH people, especially that Robin Candy, stop giving away solutions to games!

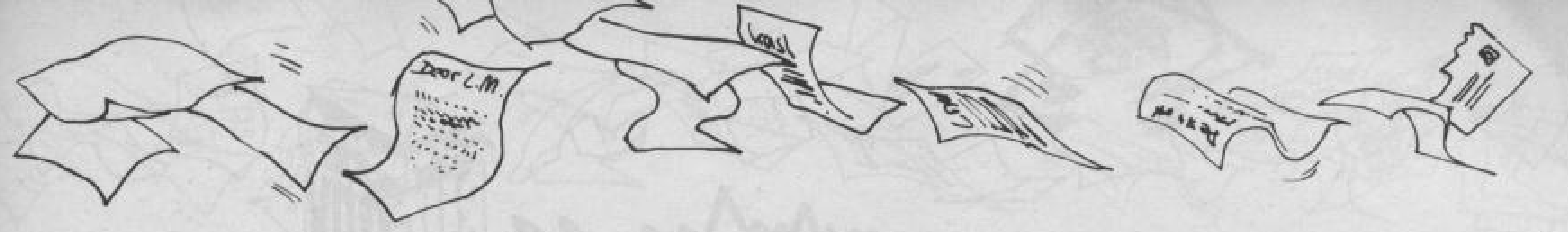
No sooner had I managed to buy *Everyone's a Wally*, than the solution is printed for the world to see! That's ten quid down the drain — thanks a lot CRASH! Couldn't you have waited at least five months (three months to allow people time to buy the game and two months to ENJOY the game)?

I, for one, shan't be buying *Dummy Run*, because I know you'll print the solution in a month or two. How's about that Mikro-Gen?

It's by no means the first time, *Tir Na Nog*, *Pyjamarama*, *Avalon*, *Shadowfire*, and even *Lords of Midnight*, which is an adventure and surely Derek Brewster's business? At least Derek does his job properly.

Please don't suggest that I ignore the articles. If you knew the agony, frustration and difficulty of facing problems in adventure games, you must appreciate how annoying it is to be given the answer. It's like





reading books or watching films, when some prat tells you the all-important ending.

Working on an adventure, you may wake up in the middle of the night with an idea, itching to try it out. But this confusion is still, to decent adventurers, enjoyable. But, if you're going through this stage of frustration and see the answer in CRASH, it's almost impossible to resist the temptation. If you use the hint, when and if you pass the final problem and the game is complete, you don't feel 100% satisfied that it was you that did it. It's a grave tragedy.

What made me sick was Rob Candy's comment, 'I'll make you suffer another month', referring to *Dun Darach*. I have two points to make:

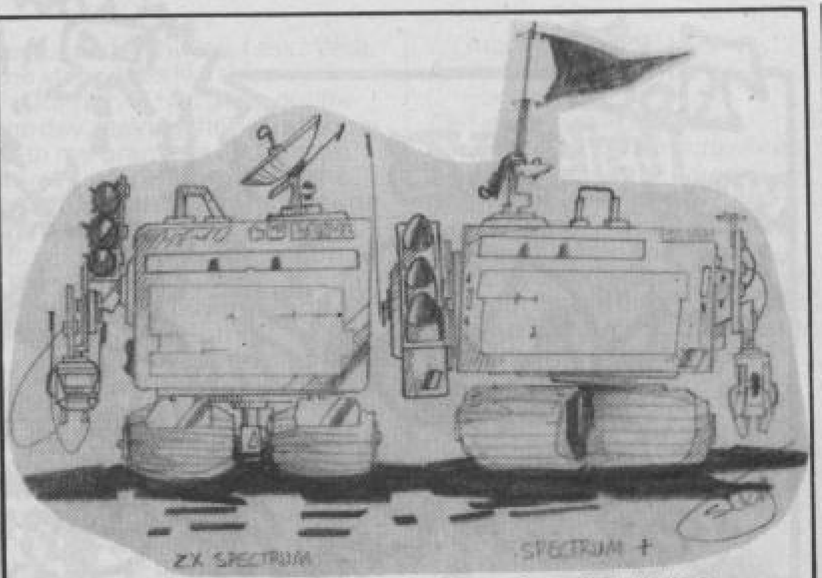
1) Most people won't have even got hold of a copy by then, let alone played it;

2) We'd rather sort out our problems ourselves, Mr Candy.

Bearing this in mind, could I propose a new rule to CRASH? No solutions or sub solutions until five months after the game is reviewed — just maps, which are helpful, but not giveaways.

Mike Roberts, Okehampton

You're not the first person to complain about Playing Tips giving away solutions too early, but you certainly are in the minority, because most letters of complaint are that solutions aren't given out soon enough. I'm sorry, but the argument holds good anyway — don't want to know the answer — don't read the piece. The Playing Tips are there to help people who are stuck and can't find any other way out of a problem. In fact every single example you quote, the games tips were released over either one, two or even three months. Are you honestly trying to tell me that you are the sort of person who turns his newspaper upside down in order to solve the crossword?
LM



I liked these drawings of techno-hardware from STEPHEN A GRAHAM, a previous contributor, from Carlisle (where CRASH gets printed).

STARION SHADOWED

Dear Ed,
Wait for us!

Tell that Tin Candy bloke to slow down a bit will you. Let me explain. . . .

Having read the review of *Starion* I thought 'that's the one for me'. I grabbed the June edition while I was in Smiths getting *Starion* and sitting down at home with a cup of tea and a biccy, I glanced through the mag while my new game was loading. As I come to Robin Candy's pages I see one bit entitled '**Starion**'. I read it, and find that in the space of 30 seconds I know all the answers to the first time grid of a game which I wanted to enjoy solving.

After playing and greatly enjoying *Starion*, I had another look at Candy's pages and find that just because he has had *Shadowfire* in the office for weeks and has played it more than any normal person in the country, he gives out the solution to the whole flippin' game in the same edition as the review, so that no-one would have time to read the newly laid out, excellent review of the game, take note of it and buy it before being told exactly how to



do it!
David Wilkes, East Sussex

If you really wanted to enjoy solving Starion, why on earth did you carry on reading when you realised what it was?! Okay, so the solution **was** *pretty early, but there were a lot more grids to beat — Robin only offered 9 anagrams out of 243! This seems entirely reasonable to me in order to help people get going (although heaven forfend I should defend RC)! As regards Shadowfire, it was one of those reviews that just missed the previous issue, and so Robin's tips were not quite as early as they may have appeared to be despite being in the same issue as the review, and in fact Beyond themselves requested playing tips for the game to be printed. Again I repeat — the tips are to help, you don't have to read them all or even at all if it is something you don't want made easy for you.*
LM

WE DO, WE DO . . .

Dear Lloyd,
I am a compulsive reader of CRASH ever since I got a Spectrum. I heard from a friend who owns a Commodore and reads ZZAP! and he says that you can send off to ZZAP! and buy any game you want as long as they have reviewed them. So why can't CRASH do the same?
Simon Cavill, Ashford

If you're that compulsive a reader, Simon, why haven't you noticed the CRASH Mail Order page in every issue? It says exactly that — what's more, you can order anything even if it hasn't been reviewed in CRASH, and as long as the very lovely Carol Kinsey can get it for you, she will.
LM

TIPS HACKED?

Dear Crash,
Not very long ago, I wrote to you giving you all my tips on Hewson Consultants' new game, *Dragontorc of Avalon*. I posted the tips, all six sides of A4 paper, to you which took me three days to write and re-write to try and make it perfect, and waited eagerly to see whether you would publish it. Then, in your June issue, I saw some tips on *Dragontorc* which I began to read through. To my horror and disgust, I saw parts of my very lengthy letter, virtually word for word, printed in your playing tips section. Not only that, but my name wasn't printed at the bottom.

So Candy, don't chop other people's letters up and take the credit by publishing them. Watch it, or you might lose a reader.
Patrick Hartley, Dewsbury

Patrick, you obviously haven't been reading Robin's Dragontorc *tips properly, or you would have noticed that in the first batch they were properly credited to Andrew Hewson of Hewson Consultants, who supplied the entire solution on the condition that it was released only over a period of time. You may have thought yours was similar, but there is absolutely no way it was 'word for word'.*
LM

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you to say Hi and in reply to Matthew Newman's letter in the July issue of CRASH.
I am Sheldon Coulthrust, and am alive and well and living in Colchester, Essex.
How could he think I was made up with a name like COULTHRUST!
S Coulthrust, Colchester

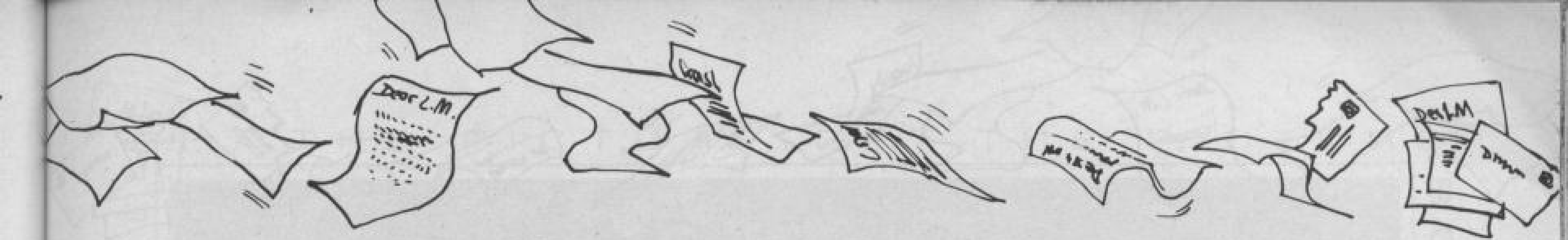
Never mind, Sheldon, you and me alike, I keep getting told that with a name like Lloyd Mangram, I must be pseudonym. Life just isn't fair, but I'm as real as you are.
LM

PRIZE PLEA

Dear Lloyd,
Every month I scour the pages of CRASH looking for it, but to no avail.

I'm talking about a competition with a prize to beat all others, a prize that any self respecting CRASH reader would sell his Spectrum to win. And the brilliant thing is, it won't cost much (no grovelling on bended knee to the Ed for this one).

The prize? A visit to Ludlow to meet the CRASH team. An



invaluable chance to get answers to all those niggling questions. Do you and Robin really hate each other? Is Robin as sweet as he sounds? Does the sun come out in Ludlow? Does the office cat eat Whiskas? Well Lloyd, how about it?

Oh, by the way, my sister Maria who has no interest in computers (poor girl) asked me, after I'd forced her to read five copies of CRASH, 'Does Robin Candy really go to school?', 'Where's Ludlow' and 'Why is CRASH called CRASH?'

Funny that, because she's normally quite intelligent.
Anna Peters, Chiswick

I've no interest in computers either and I always ask intelligent questions. But really there's no need to struggle all the way up here to Ludlow to get the answers to these questions. The answers are: YES, OBVIOUSLY NOT, NO, WE HAVEN'T GOT AN OFFICE CAT BUT THE MOUSE PREFERS PAL, HOW ABOUT WHAT? Your sister: YES HE DOES REALLY, SOUTH SHROPSHIRE, HOW DO I KNOW I'M ONLY THE LETTERS EDITOR.

I know why you are going on about Robin, you're the Anna Peters who wrote him a fan letter in issue 17.
LM

NAME THAT LOON

Dear Lloyd,
Why, oh why does someone at CRASH have it in for me?

In issue 13, in the Playing Tips section, my name was credited as CHRIS ROLURSON, while in Issue 18, Hall of Slime, I was credited as both CHRIS ROBERTSON and CHRIS ROBINSON! And just to make matters worse, you printed my photograph with some stupid eyes printed in, giving me a ridiculous expression!

Just for the record, my name is ROBINSON, not ROBERTSON or ROLURSON. Got that? Good.
Chries Rabbinson, Co Durham

Hope your eyes are better Kris. Have you considered improving the quality of your handwriting? Here lies the problem perhaps, that in our essential haste, none of us can decipher your scrawl. Please don't think I'm being either facetious or rude, but it just could be the case, don't you think?
LM

DOG SOUP

Dear Crash,
I am writing to tell you of the terrible times I have to face . . . I'm computerless. Yes, it's happened. Why me, I ask? Well, the story goes like this:

Our family had gone out for the day, leaving the dog at home with my grandma and, shock horror, when we got back the stupid dog had chewed through the wires of the power supply. (Boy, dog soup tastes good). 'But what's so bad about that?' I hear you cry, 'buy a new power supply.'

Well, there's this wimpish prat who lives with us called Travis, a sixteen year old great docile lump of gangrenous codfish who thinks 'Ah, maybe we can save eight pounds by rewiring it!'. My efforts were in vain, I tried to stop him, but he's bigger than me. He got a screwdriver and began to fiddle about with it.

Ten minutes later he came back, proclaiming that he had fixed it. We connected it all up, and we heard a very loud buzzing and could smell smoke coming from the Spectrum. Hurriedly, and I mean mega-fast, we switched it off and hoped nothing was wrong. After a bit of grovelling and persuading, we managed to borrow a friend's power supply, hooked it up and . . . nothing.

Arrgggh. No more *Starion*, *Alien 8*, *Tir Na Nog* or *Shadowfire*. No *Schizoids*, *Great Space Race*, *Formula 1 Simulator* or *Don't Buy This*. Hey . . . maybe it isn't all bad.
Arron Smith, Leicester

Can great docile lumps of gangrenous codfish actually be wimpish, especially when they're bigger than you? And I won't hear of anyone slagging Schizoids, *some games are so bad they become classics — just get your Spectrum mended and suggest to your dog that hoover cables are more powerfully tasty.*
LM

A WALLY WRITES

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you about that old topic, Software Piracy, and how CRASH and software houses help the pirates.

Firstly, CRASH encourages Software piracy by printing in the reviews the keys needed to control the game. Surely this helps those who copy the software? Instead of attempting to find out the keys needed by trial and error, they simply refer to the CRASH review of the game.

Secondly, the software houses help the copiers by putting User Definable Keys options into their programs. Surely this helps those who use the copied programs



immensely? Also, on screen instructions help the pirates. So really, software houses are cutting their own throats instead of the pirates doing it for them.
Andrew Gaunt, Walsall

I'll give you the benefit of the doubt, Andrew, and think that you're joking. Not the old we-print-the-control-keys chestnut again. I mean **H-O-N-E-S-T-L-Y!!** *(That was frustrated anger showing through). We often get early copies of games without full instructions and for the averagely intelligent, methodical person, it takes a minute or two to work out the keys. As to your second point, I suppose you could argue that the best way to stamp out piracy is simply for the software houses not to market games at all . . .*
LM

FANTASTIC FREEBIES?

Dear Lloyd,
It's nice to see someone giving something away for nothing, but I was surprised to see your magazine describe as 'fantastic' the games you are giving away with your subscription offer. I would suggest this is stretching the truth more than a little.

Of the six games on offer, CRASH has reviewed three. *Match Day* got an excellent write-up, the reviews of *Blue Max* ranged from 'great' to 'OK-ish' and the general rating for *Zaxxon* was 'a great disappointment'. The only reviews I have seen of *Flak* describe it as a 'rip off'. *Roland's Rat Race* and *Street Hawk* have not yet been released, so we don't know whether they are any good or not.

Since part of your function is to review games for your readers and warn them off bummers, it is not very consistent to describe them as fantastic in another part of the magazine. Would it not be more honest to say you are offering one great game, one okay game, two lousy games and two unknown quantities — or would that not sell many subscriptions?
Norman Boyle, Glasgow

Of course it wouldn't! Come on now, surely we're allowed just a teensy weensy fib now and then to earn poor ol' Lloyd his pitiful salary? No? Okay you win. Still, wasn't such a bad offer was it? And after all, as you so rightly point out, apart from Flak *you could check them out in earlier CRASH editions, and two brand new as then unreleased Ocean games for free is pretty exciting.*
LM

IS IT TRUE?

Dear Lloyd,
Fellow CRASHlings and lesser mortals, lend me your eyes. I have a complaint to make. How do Romantic Robot have the nerve to produce a microdrive copier and then produce a game which cannot be copied using this splendid utility? Yes, my copy of *Wriggler* usually fails to load. So here is a message to all you security conscious software houses. Don't be so vicious!

Now some questions. Is the Terminal Man any relation to Shatter, an American cartoon strip? Since when did Konami change their name to Kunami? Is is true that CRASH is so good that people eat it when they've read it?
J M Shearing, Godstone

The Terminal Man is no relation at all — it's purely coincidental, honest. Konami changed their name to Kunami on my 1922 Hermes typewriter, and still do so frequently. I couldn't tell you about the taste of CRASH because I'm vegetarian by habit but what I can tell you is that there are a few people round these offices who chew Sinclair User for breakfast!
LM

MUM FUN

Dear Lloyd,
What a great magazine you've got. It's so good that I caught my Mum reading it last week.

Oh well, back to reality. I must say how your magazine has improved over the past few months. I know it's a team effort, but you've got to give credit to Mr Kean for using his imagination and initiative in making the best computer magazine in Britain.

I have a few criticisms, in that the price of your magazine is increasing (not a lot of change out of a pound), not enough playing tips, and the Ultimate of all trash — Jetman.

An idea — why don't you produce this most colourful and informative magazine twice monthly?
Julian Walker, Birmingham
Because I would have a nervous breakdown, that's why — I don't care about the others, but I've got to think of my lifestyle even if you won't. What's wrong with Jetman? And leave MISTER Kean out of it, there are rumours (highly secret of course) that a certain other computer mag was so impressed with his ability to design something that looked just like their's that they've offered him a job (but don't tell Lord EMAP).
LM

THE ORIGINality OF LIFE

Dear Lloyd,
I read with interest Roger Kean's opinions about originality, but I do not think this applies to software as well as to music.

Half of your CRASH Smashes in recent months have been based on platform games, so you cannot speak of unoriginality while you praise games using the same idea. No, I think the problem is not with originality, but with development.

If in music, someone adds a drumbeat to a piece of classical music, it can't really improve the tune. However, if someone extends the ideas, it may be enjoyable. It is similar in software: *Kong* from Ocean was awful, and so were all its imitators, but the idea was developed into *Frankenstein*, which was at least decent.

However, these can be overdeveloped. I find myself frequently in need of a good shoot-em-up, because I think the modern arcade adventures too difficult. (ie *Everyone's a Wally*). I have to relax my poor aching brain after a hard day's work, and this is not the way to do it!

Surely some software houses could give a help sheet on request for those of us who take too long finding the right key. What do I show the relatives every Christmas? They won't be interested in great graphics or scintillating sound, but they will want something easier to play.

There is a lack of these games (only two good ones recently). So please, don't leave the arcade game as it is! There is a lot of room for development, unlike the arcade adventure idea, which I think is almost exhausted. If software producers become obsessed solely with this, then it is obvious that more and more will nose into bankruptcy.

As for an 'alternative software', I don't think this is likely. Even though it has worked in music, there is only one language and a specified memory for the Spectrum and, as yet, even an unknown software producer can make a good game.

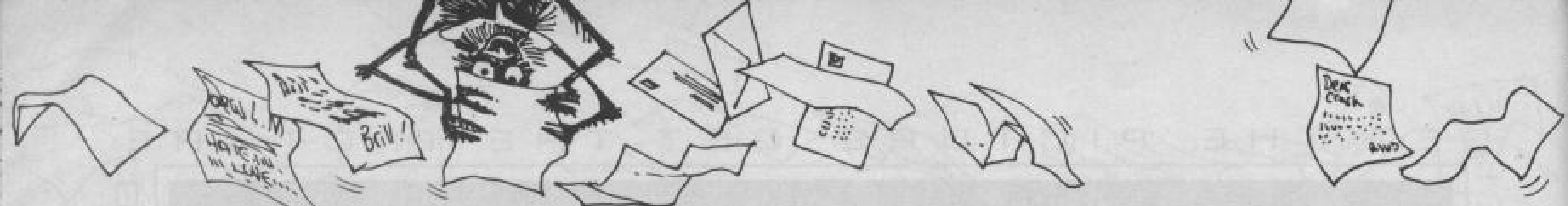
Finishing on a 'minor' point I think it is offputting that you have so many errors in your otherwise excellent magazine. Apart from the italics *which suddenly appear* in the middle of *a line for* no *apparent reason*, I have recently become infuriated by incorrect prices and missing

A somewhat topical and political drawing entitled Nightmare in Clive Castle. This was from G A KESTER of Hartlepool, Cleveland. He asks what art materials Oliver Frey uses. Answers: the illustration board is Daler Truline; inks are Winsor & Newton for brushwork and Steig Products FW Non-clogging waterproof drawing ink for the airbrush. All these materials come from Langford & Hill in London.





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CBM 64



pokes (especially *Monty Mole*). Isn't it possible for someone to proof-read the whole magazine before it is printed?
Simon Walters, Cannock

How dare you! It is proofread, 's'no **fault** *of mine* if the **prroff***reader is a* Russian Eskimo. *Seriously though, missing or incorrect prices are often the result of not knowing the actual price at the time of going to press and sometimes, of course, they are mistakes brought on by pressure of work. Shall I trot out the 'it isn't easy being a software reviewer' line, or would you rather have the 'considering I was an underprivileged working class boy wot got no education, isn't it amazing that I can spell at all, let alone know what an italic is . . .' excuse? The thing is, when you are reading CRASH you are concentrating on it (I trust), whereas when we are writing it, all we're really thinking about is where's the next beer coming from (well Graeme Kidd is anyway, I prefer a nice dry American martini with an olive on a stick in one of those inverted pyramid-shaped glasses).*
LM

AN ANALYST WRITES

Dear Lloyd,
I remember some years ago, when arcade games were the fast growing craze in this country, news programmes such as 'Nationwide' found it necessary to conduct interviews with what they considered to be the average video game player. From what I recall, the basis for the interviews seemed to be that many people, especially parents, were anxious about the vast amounts of money being 'wasted' by games players.

When questioned, not one of the interviewees, as far as I can remember, gave a full answer to the question 'Why do you like playing video games?'

Back then, it seemed stupid; of course we knew why we liked playing video games! It is because, well . . . I like . . . um, yes.

And that's how it stands. So I decided to do a little investigating of my own. I shall begin by exploding a few of the myths which surround video, or computer game playing. First, the statement 'It's a challenge', which some of the old arcade boys used as an excuse for pumping £100 plus into *Donkey Kong*, *Defender et al*. Well balancing a pool cue on your nose is a challenge, getting 5 A Levels is a challenge, but who pays money to do that? I will return to the 'challenge' of video games when a few other points have been sorted out.

I understand that current opinion favours the view that programmers write games that they themselves would want to play. Really? If this is indeed the case, then it contradicts several other points. What can computer/video games be successfully compared with? Films, records, books? The average film made today costs several million pounds to make and around £2.00 to see, the average LP takes several months to record and costs £5.00 to buy. The average novel can take anything up to several years to write and paperbacks cost from £1.50 up . . . Computer games, of supposedly high quality, can cost from £5.00 to £15.00 (games, not business or educational software, that is).

Now, back to the 'programmers write what they want to play' question. More like 'programmers write what they want to sell'. Blasphemy? Well, I don't really think so.

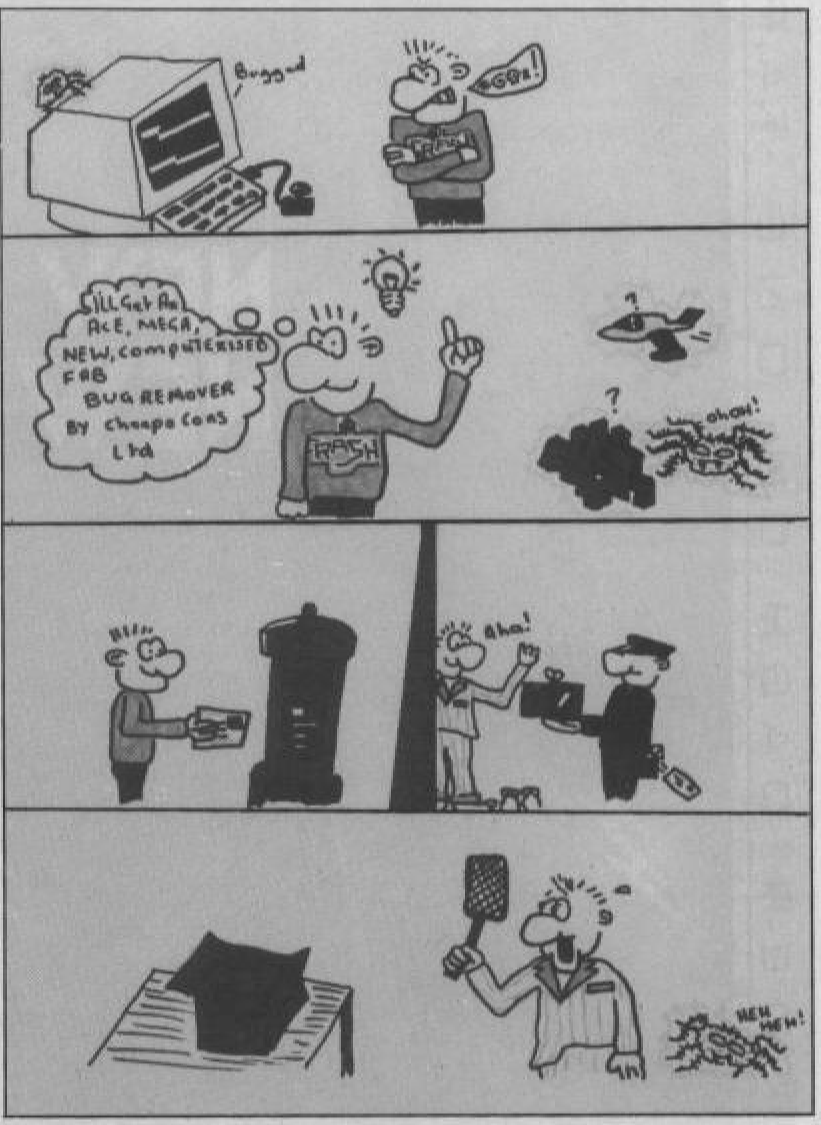
Do all the authors write books that they want to read? Are all books excellent, and worthy of high critical acclaim? So we don't want to compare computer games with paperback novels do we? Not unless the prices were the same anyway.

So what about records? Initially, the trends would appear similar, especially with magazines running top 30s etc. But, personal taste has a lot to do with records, and music in general, whereas, if a computer game is awful then no-one will appreciate it. An awful record will still get radio airplay, however.

Films — now there is a thing! Of course games aren't like films. I am afraid they are, or rather they have become, like films. Major films are preceded with a lot of hype, glossy adverts etc: supposedly major computer games — *Sabre Wulf*, *Underwurlde*, *Lords of Midnight*, *Valkyrie*, *Frankie*, *JSW* — are all built up before release. Films all rely on stars, and I'm sure we realise who Willy, Wally, Monty, Dan, Ted (and so on) are. You don't? Well, you will!

Films don't run for more than a few weeks. Most computer games are designed to be completed in a short time. Ever wonder why the Ultimate games have a percentage as well as a high score? Well, I'll tell you — it's so you know when you've finished, and also that it is time to buy the next game.

The old arcade favourites didn't have a percentage rating or a completion, because the way they made money was to keep you thinking you could always do better next time. With home computers it is different. Once a sale is made, the only way to make more money is to sell something else. A game that lasted forever and was also a good game, would not be very profitable. So sequels are a good idea — for money-making, if nothing else.



MARK WOODS from Bradford offers this amusing view of the hardware add-on problem . . .

I'm not sure that this applies to all games or all software houses — only most of them. When CRASH reviews a game, why not include a rating of estimated life, to give some indication of how long an average player will take to finish or get bored with the game. Do not confuse this with 'addictive qualities' — it's not the same thing.

SO! why do people play computer games? Why do I play computer games? No good books to read I suppose. Sorry, I was almost beginning to sound serious as well.

The problem is: people who like video games also like games that they can complete. This is playing into the hands of the producers, as it is just as easy for them to produce a game with an END as it would be for to produce an everlasting game of a similar style.
John Tapper, Garway

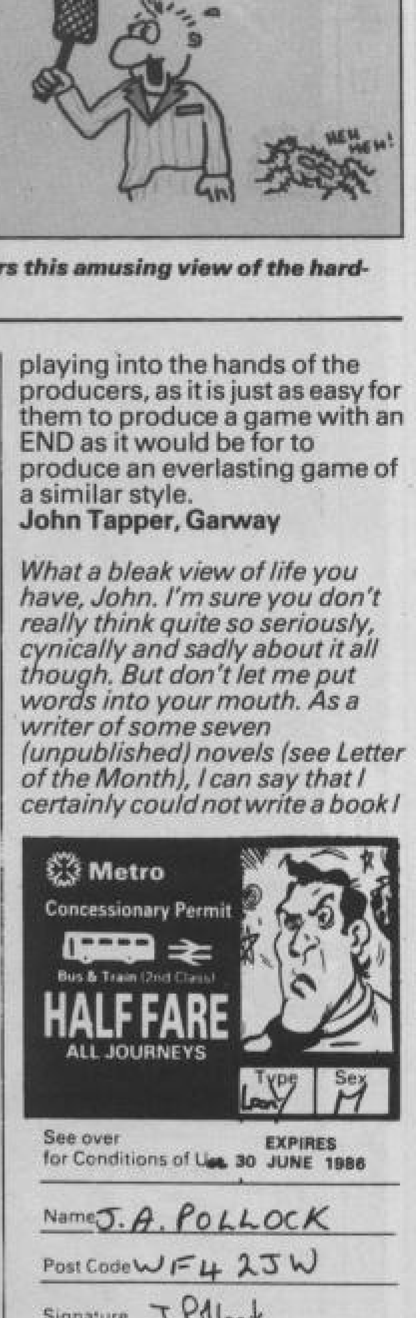
What a bleak view of life you have, John. I'm sure you don't really think quite so seriously, cynically and sadly about it all though. But don't let me put words into your mouth. As a writer of some seven (unpublished) novels (see Letter of the Month), I can say that I certainly could not write a book I

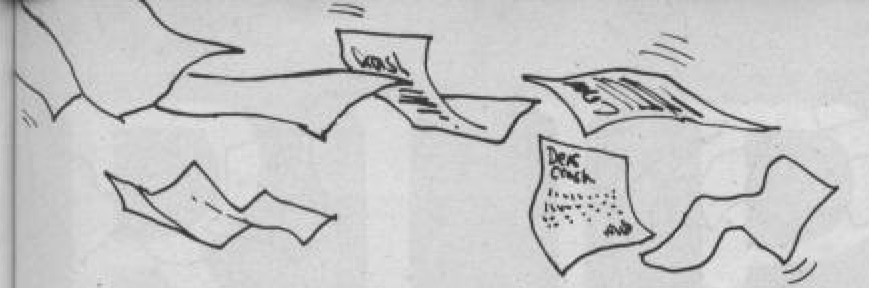
WHAT AN OKTUP!

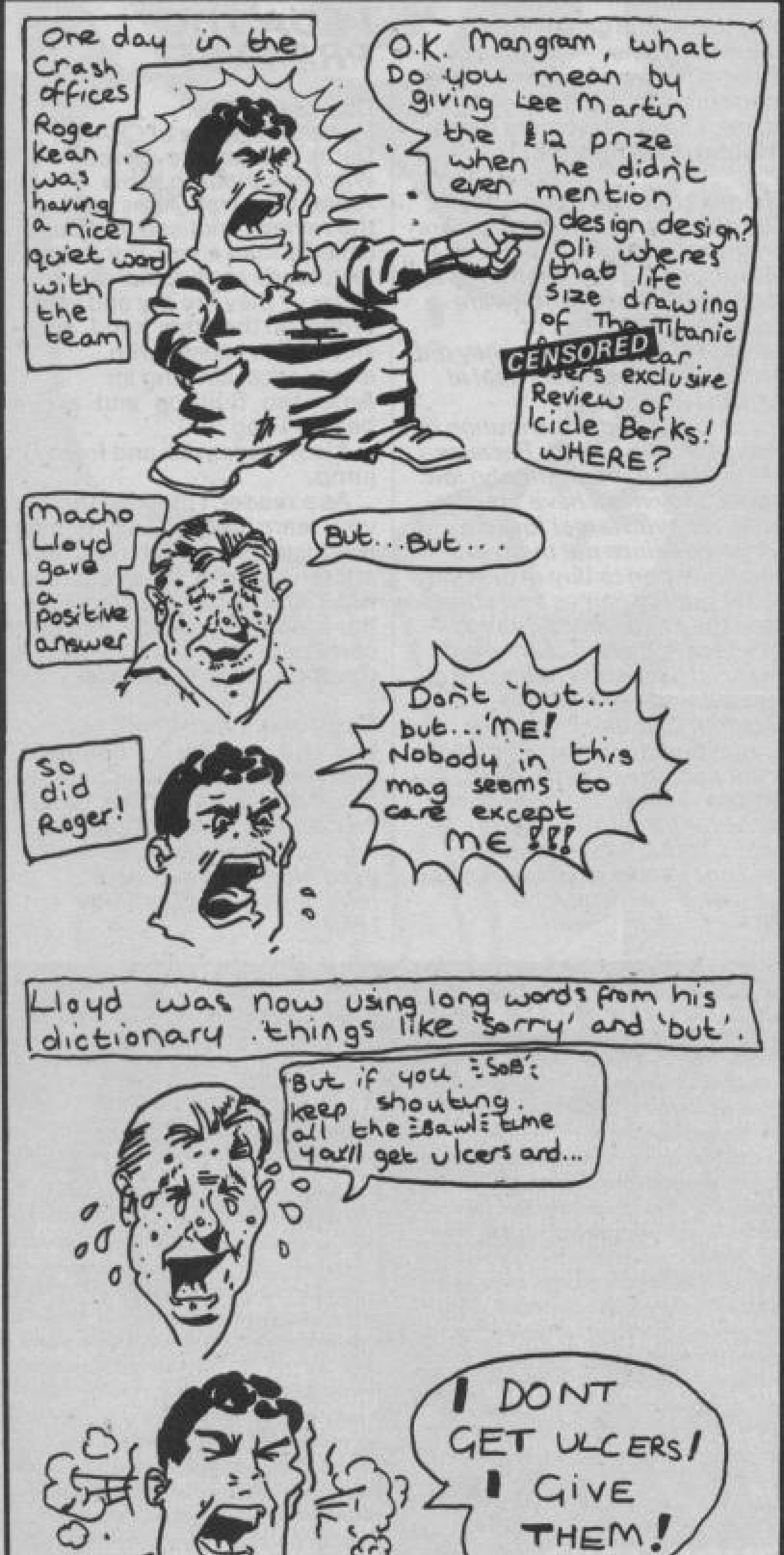
Dear Lloyd
Ach! Ach! Gargle! Gnurgle! What is this? Little old Oktup really Okt it up didn't he? He called Jetman a Pollock!!! I am most upset. I don't look like that, I'm sure.

Never mind, I might forgive Ultimate if they bribe me with gifts and apologise properly!
James Pollock, Wakefield

Gosharootie, what can I say?
LM





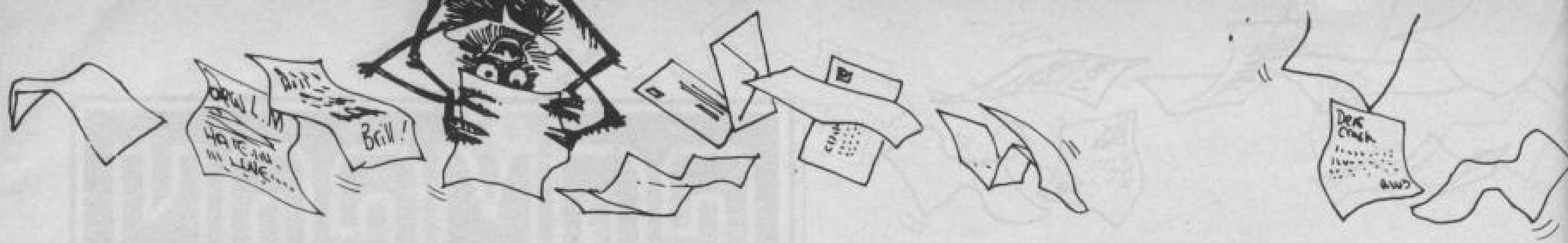


My favourite this month comes from LEE MARTIN, Hove, Sussex, with a cartoon about a day in the life . . . huh! Anyway, just to know there's no hard feelings over being likened to a certain well known American President/actor, Lee gets £12 of software.

wouldn't want to read, and I think the same goes for programmers with an important exception — an author is usually alone with his imagination, whereas the computer programmer may be part of a team where programming, games designing and scenarist skills are separated out. This means that a skilful programmer can easily work on something which overall he doesn't necessarily like and still do a very good job.

An estimated life rating would be impractical because you would be asking reviewers an impossible question to answer. Ratings in general are of dubious value as far as I can see — something over which I think I can say I have been consistent — and to introduce more seems pointless, especially when it is something that is entirely based on an individual view rather than one that several can agree on. Has anyone got strong feelings on some of John's interesting ideas?

LM



MY IDEAL GAME

Dear CRASH,
I would like to offer my ideas on what should make a computer game a CRASH Smash:
1) There is no point in superb graphics if the first screen is impossible or difficult to get through (eg *Jack and the Beanstalk*).
2) If a game has many screens, there should be a facility for entering each screen (eg *Loderunner*). *Manic Miner* was a frustrating 3 or 4 screen game to me, until the screen codes were supplied — and at £6.00, 4 screens is poor value. I don't think *MM* or *JSW* would have been as popular if the many pokes had not been supplied.
3) There should also be an infinite lives function (eg *Loderunner*, again, offers this). As many people are not CRASH champions, many good games lose their addictiveness when regularly confronted with the 'Game Over' screen.
4) All games should now offer re-definable keys. When attempting to play some games, I often wonder which biological species the designer belongs to.
5) No more than five keys should be used (excepting strategy adventures) after five, forget it.
6) Joystick-key mode should be concurrent. When playing with more than one person it is frustrating when you have to reload the game to change the mode (eg *Transam*).
7) Prices are far too high for certain games. When companies like Firebird (*Booty* £2.50) and Mastertronic (*Finders Keepers* £1.99) can produce excellent games for low prices, £9.00 and above seems unreasonable. A poor game can be purchased at any price.
8) All games should have a slow down, or easier play function. I originally purchased my Spectrum for my daughters, who frequently play a game for a short time only, due to the difficulty of the game.

Computers are for everyone, not just the high scorers. Games should be made enjoyable, not difficult, and I mention *Loderunner* yet again as an example. Here is a game with 150 screens, some easy, some moderate and some extremely difficult. Due to the infinite lives and any screen feature, however, I have been able to play the whole game. This is value for money — instead of waiting for weeks for one of the magazines to come up with pokes, I have a complete game.
I Hunter, East Kilbride

There's some very good points. The only two I'll comment on are price and difficulty. It's true that Mastertronic and Firebird have changed the face of software prices but, at the risk of offending Mastertronic, they did a marvellous business deal at the outset to achieve enormously wide distribution of pretty terrible games. Because of the (then extraordinarily) low prices, they must have made a small (or even large) fortune which has since put them in a good position to buy in or write better quality games and still keep the prices low. Firebird, let's face it, has a rather large financial backer to enable it to do much the same — British Telecom (not that I'm suggesting they mustn't make a profit because of that). As to difficulty, we do tend to classify games at least in our own minds, and CRASH Smashes may not appeal to all because of the game's difficulty.
LM

PEDANTIC PRANNET?

Dear Lloyd,
In the June issue of CRASH, Derek Brewster reviewed *Witches Cauldron* in his Adventure Trail. After reading the review, I noticed that Derek called a toad slimy. But in actual fact, toads are nowhere near slimy — they are dry and warty. Frogs, on the other hand, **are** slimy. And I speak with experience, keeping an American Bullfrog and a Fire-bellied Toad.

Also, toads walk and frogs jump.

As a reader, I thought that your team had an IQ of 250, after producing such a fab mag. But after this review I shall decrease it to 230. If Derek is not to blame, then collar Mikro-Gen, and get it corrected.
Geoff Grayson, Doncaster

Sorry about that Geoff, but you've obviously not bumped into some of the slimy toads we have! As a matter of fact, I would be delighted if my IQ were as high as you so kindly suggest even after the travesty of referring to toads as slimy.
LM

MICRONET

MICRONET LETTERS BETTER VALUE

Hi,
I've just finished reading CRASH No 17, which I bought at lunchtime today. I read it for 45 minutes over lunch, and from 5.15pm to 9.15pm. 4 hours 45 minutes for 95p is marginally better value than using Micronet!

Keep up the good work.
I Stones, 204708737

And what's more, you can always eat it afterwards if you're hungry.
LM

EGGY THUMP

I have just purchased a copy of Chucky Egg 2.

I am amazed at the quality of the tape cassette it comes on — it is the worst type of cassette tape I have ever seen from a software company. When I play it on my Spectrum, it sounds like Denis Rufarse, or however you spell it.

But I have found out how to diagnose the problem. All you have to do is get your tape and chuck it at a nice solid outside wall.

CHUCKY TAPE!
Steven Broad, 073768287

Sounds like a heavy solution . . .
LM

NASTY MAN

I HAVE HORSE-NAPPED YOUR MASCOT OLI THE FOAL, EITHER SEND ME 1 MILLION POUNDS OR I TURN HIM INTO DOG FOOD.
Paul, Adam (A friend) & Robin 532843116

Go ahead, I hate horses, it's Jeremy Spencer who will be upset — on the other hand his dog Poddy (honest — that's the name) might be interested, in the dog food I mean.
LM

NORTHERN LIGHTS

Welcome Lloyd from all us oop North,
Eee its reet grand to have you on't net hinny. As you can see, my dialect is suffering somewhat, me being a GEORDIE living near Barrow in Furness (Famed for the Bus Depot). Why don't you start some review frames, or the like, on here?
David Bianchi, 022963348

You've got to be kidding. After the stunningly enormous financial loss caused by Lord EMAP's injunction last month, we can barely afford the phone bill let alone Micronet's IPdom fees! It's under discussion though . . .
LM

SENSIBLE MBX

Dear Sir/Madam (could be a pseudonym!)
Come on LM, keep the software reviews out of Tech Niche and have it solely hardware oriented, because after all little enough hardware is highlighted in your mag as it is.

Put the 'artistic' prog reviews in their own section, along with other non-games software such as Utility and Educational Software.
Steven Brown, 417718638

MBX Graeme Kidd and tell him off.
LM

RUDE MBX?

Hi Pillock Features
What's the big idea, boasting about your achievements in circulations increases?

Yet again, you immaturely try to insult the opposition in your reference to YS on page 48 by implying that its readers place their copies in the water.

What's this about not replying to letters due to the sheer volume etc. Does this include MBX? If so, then why? Don't use the old volume trick as it won't wear as Your Computer, who have a circulation of approx double yours, does reply.
S Brown, 417718638

Is Brown a pseudonym for the colour of something? What's wrong in saying that our circulation is increasing if it is, and what proof do you have that Your Computer replies to all letters?
LM

CHEEKY MBX!

If you do not want to go out of business, I suggest that you start to learn something about computing, rather than purely playing childish games. To start with, can you tell me the address of the ROM routine to print out the contents of the BC register in decimal?

With regards from someone interested enough in computing and intelligent enough to do more than play games,
Alan Potter, 417782056

But obviously not intelligent enough to get on with it and accept that other people have other interests. In fact we are perfectly capable (and believe me, I mean it) of telling you the address, but such obscure questions are usually answered by books. Buy one, and learn to read. Perhaps a childish game player on the Net might be prepared to teach you how. . . .
LM

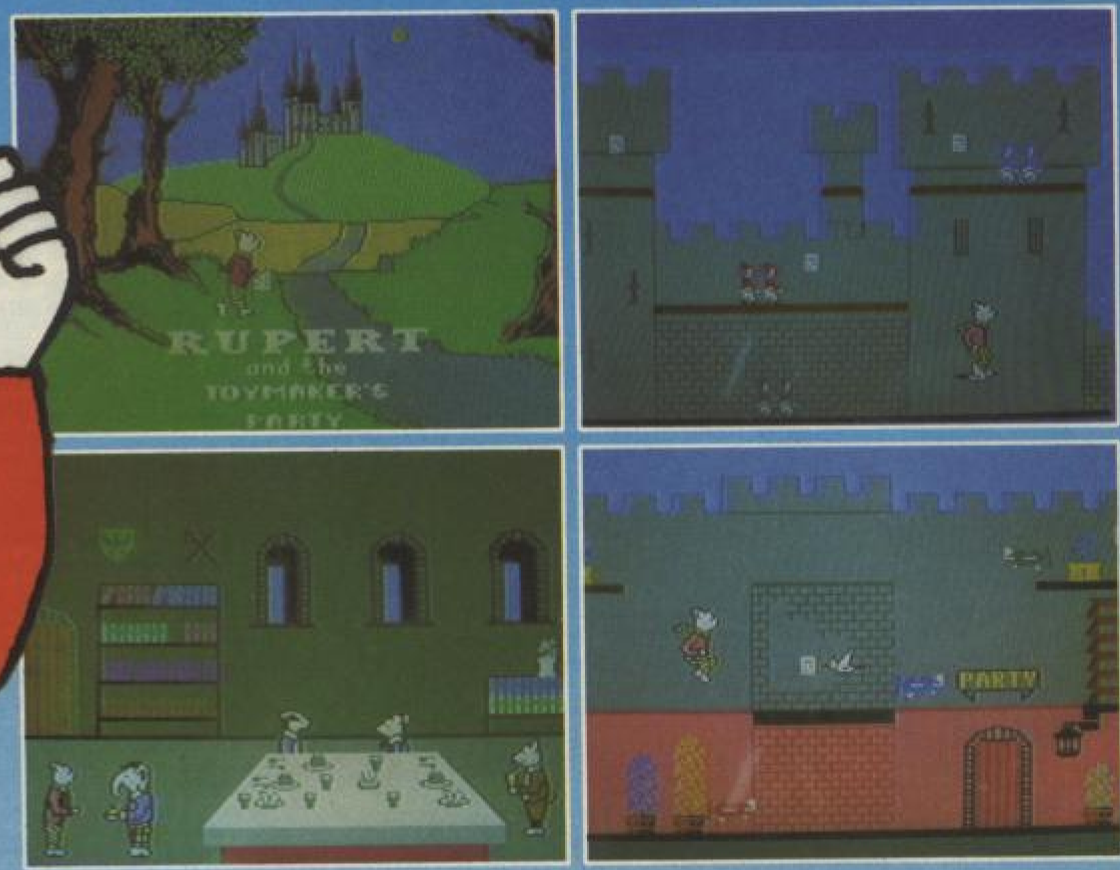
Okay, then, that's the lot for another month. Let's hope this issue gets the wide sale it should do! I'd be interested in any comments anyone wants to make regarding the injuncted issue (August), but remember I'll have to be very careful about what gets printed!

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PLAYING TIPS

from ROBIN CANDY



Once again the Playing Tips section is under attack from readers (see Forum). Does anyone like this section anymore?

I've replied to some of the points raised in Mangram's letters page, but I would like to hear from some more of you about the matters discussed: should I leave games for at least five months before publishing tips, or should I leave it for at least one month and only publish a few tips for each game every month as is the case at the moment? Of course there are a few exceptions.

If any of you saw last month's intro you would have read about how I was promised a nice logo by the unscrupulous Publishing Executive, *Roger Kean* (see, he even gets such privileges as having his name in italics — I have to make do with plain old bold typeface). Well, (this is extreme anger here, so I'm allowed at least one opposite of ill) did you see any new logos?

The only difference that I saw was that the photo had changed (no, not a new one, the same old one, but in a different position on the page). Does this mean that I will have a new logo this month, or will I have to to take extreme retaliatory action and nick his nice comfy chair? (I haven't even got an uncomfortable chair — I did have a chair for about 2 minutes the other day but it was kindly removed by a member of the ZZAP! mob because he wanted two chairs, the other for his ego to sit on). As you can no doubt see, the life of Crash Minion is not a happy one (especially without a chair).

At the time of writing (July 24th) most of the tips that are coming into the offices seem to be mainly for *Dun Darach* but hopefully now that we are well into the summer holidays there will be a bit more variety. I particularly want some more tips for the other games in the *Fourth Protocol*.

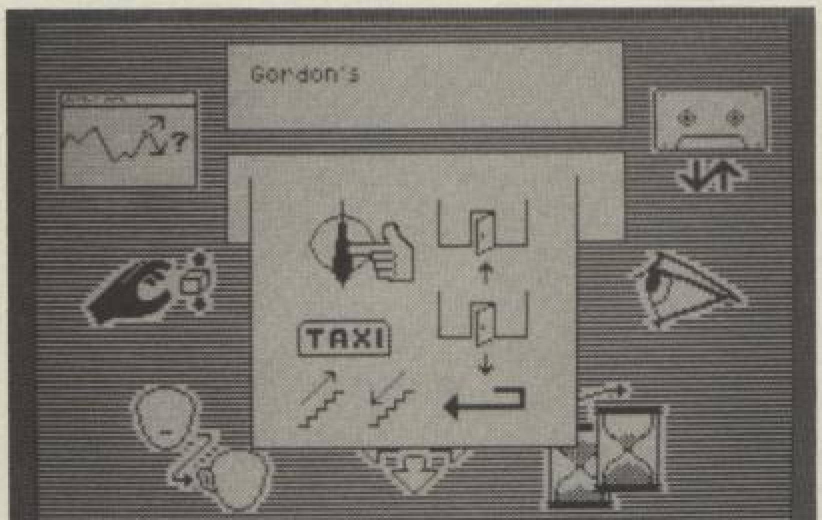
The maps seem to be increasing in size, detail and quantity (particularly *Dun Darach* and *Nodes of Yesod* maps). Should you wish to submit a map then send it to the usual address — but if you want your map returned then either enclose the appropriate amount of postage or even better send a photocopy of your map with the colours marked on, if any are necessary. I suppose that's enough of the intro muck so on with the tips.

THE FOURTH PROTOCOL

Some Top Secret tips have been smuggled to me by Crash agent Andrew Lewis **based somewhere in Leicester. So only read on if you're desperately stuck in part one of the game: the Nato papers.**

The Cencom computer contains a file called 'Telephone'. If this file is examined then you will discover it contains three telephone numbers: those of Blenheim (computer); Medical Security and Sir Anthony Plumb. The last number is only to be used when you have all the details about the traitor and his contact otherwise valuable prestige points will be lost. Medical security can only be contacted after Bracton has 'phoned. Blenheim computer, however, can be 'phoned at any time.

The strategy for play is to read all your memos and files first, then you must decode your password for Blenheim computer; this is usually PHOENIX, FIREBIRD or ROCKET. Once this is done then 'phone Blenheim and transfer all the files. The files at Blenheim are: Nato; Paper 1; Paper 2; Paper 3; Paper 4; Paper 5; MOD; Cabinet; Foreign; Abbs; Stanistav; Pizza; Maras; Pasternak; Faulkner; Bracton; Thorn; Blodwyn; Trade; Names; Delivery; Nilson; Omparade; Shoukir and Fox. Now take time off to read the files. By analysis of the files it is possible to narrow down the choice of traitor to either Night, Faulkner, Sopwith, Janes or Allen because they were the only people with access to all five files and a photocopier.



Assign 25 traitors to Abbs. When you are asked what you wish to do about Stanistav then select other options and type 'Turn Stanistav' (enter) and then type 'Jan Stanistav' (enter). This should get things moving. When Stanistav defects then take the watchers off Abbs and put them on Allen. When a watcher contacts you and gives you a 'phone number then 'phone it. Now search the flat and interrogate the Landlord. Now arrest Allen and transfer him but don't use the heavy methods option because this looses prestige points.

After a while you will be notified about Warburton and Banister via a memo so put 25 watchers on each of them. Later you will be asked to call a telephone box number. Do this and dig up the object there. Now inform Special Branch of your findings.

When you are contacted about Johnston via a memo then put Watchers on him (about 20 should be enough). Eventually you will be asked in a memo what to do about Pasternak. Reply to this with the 'approach Johnston' option. Later a 'phone call from Johnston gives you information about meeting with Pasternak, you MUST go to this immediately.

When the NEB plans are leaked you must analyse the paper or you will either scare off the agent or loose some of your prestige points. Do not bother trying to make the paper reveal it's source because the following court case will lower your prestige value. Besides Willis is later caught via his fingerprints so prosecute him.

25 watchers should be placed on both Faulkner and Genovese. This will allow British Telecom to intercept a 'phone call which, when the tape of it is analysed, will allow you to compare voice prints. After receiving a 'phone call concerning voice analysis you will be able to travel to Stockholm.

Diplomatic files are kept at Stockholm. But there are also others which are kept at Umea. Read the files Commander, Incident, Nilson, Stenbern, Westin, Rosencranz. There are several locations that can be visited: Storuman, this is where Rosencranz and Anna Nilson can be found; Stensele, where Gunnar Westin lives; Borgatjall, go climbing here and you will receive a report from Stromisson which should help you to answer the questions posed by Sir Anthony Plumb.

DOMESDAY CASTLE

From Simon Hern **of Bedford**

The route to take to complete the game is: upper right door, upper right door, lower right door, lower right door, upper right door and then the lower right door seven times. Leave the castle via the top right door before the castle explodes.

PLAYING TIPS

STARION



Here is some more of *STARION*'s solution as sent in by Tim Dawson **of Farnham.**

BLOCK 2 GRID 2
AD 1882: SHERLOCK — Detective begins in 'A study in scarlet'
AD 1983: YACHT — Australia's has a winged hull
AD 1894: ARGON — Rayleigh and Ramsay's inert gas
AD 1982: HEART — Barney Clark's is artificial
AD 1971: PENCE — Britain's new pennies
AD 0570: MECCA — Muhammid's birthplace
AD 1880: EXETER — Necktie appears in Oxford college
AD 1962: MISSILE — Crisis in Cuba
BC 0257: EUREKA — 'I have found it' quoth Archemides
GRID PASSWORD: EMPHY-SEMA

BLOCK 2 GRID 2
AD 1665: RATS — Great plague carriers
AD 1666: PUDDING — Sweet lane in the great fire of London
AD 1215: SCROLL — Stationery Magna Carta
AD 1956: AMPEX — First video recording system
AD 1903: ORVILLE — He's right in 'The Flyer'
AD 1484: CLAM — From this Botticelli's Venus is born
AD 1829: OARS — Help Oxford win the boat race
AD 1565: LISA — Leonardo's morning lady
AD 1773: IRON — Metal for Coalbrookdale's bridge
GRID PASSWORD: ACROPOLIS

BLOCK 2 GRID 3
AD 1557: RUDDER — Steer Drake's Golden Hind around the world
AD 1961: PIGS — JFK's fiasco in this cuban bay
AD 1913: GEIGER — He counts Alpha particles
AD 1602: PENDULUM — Galileo's swinger
AD 1959: SILICON — Integrated circuit is backwards
AD 1876: TELEPHONE — Alexander Graham's has a ring to it
AD 1919: AIRSHIP — Transatlantic first
AD 1932: NEUTRON — No charge
AD 1916: INTERRUPT — Prevent bullet hitting the Baron's propellor
GRID PASSWORD: STRAPPING

BLOCK 2 GRID 4
AD 0035: KISS — Judas shops Jesus with one
AD 1785: EDITOR — 'The Thunderer' needs control
AD 1935: RADAR — Palindromic Radio detection and Ranging
AD 1596: THERMOMETER — Galilei takes temperature
AD 1916: ALCOHOL — Getting prohibitively stopped in America
AD 1834: ANODE — Faraday's positive about electrolysis
AD 1928: MOUSE — Mickey the rodent is born
AD 1933: REICH — Chancellor Hitler proclaims third
AD 1853: DICKENS — Carol's Christmas author
GRID PASSWORD: TRADEMARK

BLOCK 2 GRID 5
AD 1862: LIGHT — Focault can't see its speed
AD 1854: CARDIGAN — General wooly charge of the Light Brigade
BC 0027: AUGUSTUS — Octavian's new identity
AD 1938: BIRO — He makes a point of balls
AD 1820: AMPERE — Andre—Marie's current unit
AD 1815: LAMP — Davy's minor genius
AD 1928: ANTIBIOTIC — Fleming's penicillin is the first
AD 1811: AUSTEN — 'Sense and Sensibility' Jane
AD 1961: VOSTOK — Gargarin's ship
GRID PASSWORD: BALACLAVA

BLOCK 2 GRID 6
BC 0300: EUCLID — His space is geometric
AD 1888: FILM — Moving pictures are made of this
AD 1900: LABOUR — Found working party
AD 1981: WEDDING — Royal couple couple
AD 1744: ANTHEM — 'God save the King' will become ours
AD 0037: NAILS — Carpenter's material for suspension
AD 1747: KITE — Franklin's flying conductor
AD 1948: ORWELL — Big Brother's father
AD 1907: SHELL — Royal Dutch hatches
GRID PASSWORD: SNOWFLAKE

BLOCK 2 GRID 7
AD 1834: ENGINE — Babbage's calculating device
AD 1000: ERICSSON — He finds a new land in America
BC 0776: ATHLETE — Olympic contestant starts the Greek calendar
AD 1590: GALILEI — He dropped his balls off the Tower of Pisa
AD 1855: GAS — Fuel for Von Bunsen's device
AD 1954: ATOLL — Hydrogen bikini on a coral island
AD 1936: GOLDS — Owens gets four in Berlin
AD 1963: RUBY — Gem shoots Lee Harvey Oswald
AD 1908: T — Ford's Model
GRID PASSWORD: AGGREGATE

BLOCK 2 GRID 8
AD 1941: JET — Whittle powerlessly
AD 1957: SPUTNIK — Orbiting travelling companion
AD 1981: SHUTTLE — Reusable rocket from Badminton
AD 1896: TORCH — Light the modern Olympics
AD 1898: ESCALATOR — Moving stairs in Harrods
AD 1944: IMF — Found Money fund in Bretton woods
AD 1806: ARC — Triumphant symbol in Paris
BC 0417: ELECTRA — Euripedes has a complex
AD 1721: MINISTRY — Walpole in his prime
GRID PASSWORD: MAJESTIES

BLOCK 2 GRID 9
AD 1553: MONARCH — Lady Jane's nine day position
AD 1941: OYSTERS — Pearl Harbour's contents
AD 1945: UN — Charter signed in San Francisco
AD 1926: ICI — Imperial chemical industries
AD 1495: PAINT — Material for Da Vinci's last supper
AD 1877: MARS — Schiaperelli finds canals here
AD 1882: TCHAIKOVSKY — His overture after seventy years
AD 1841: RUBBER — Material for good year for Spock
AD 1981: PACIFIC — Double Eagle V floats over it
GRID PASSWORD: IMPROMPTU
BLOCK PASSWORD: METABASIS

KUNG FU

From Iain Dunford

As soon as the game starts walk to the middle of the playing area and wait for the computer. Now kick him. If he doesn't fall down take one step back and repeat the process until he does fall down.

SPY Vs SPY

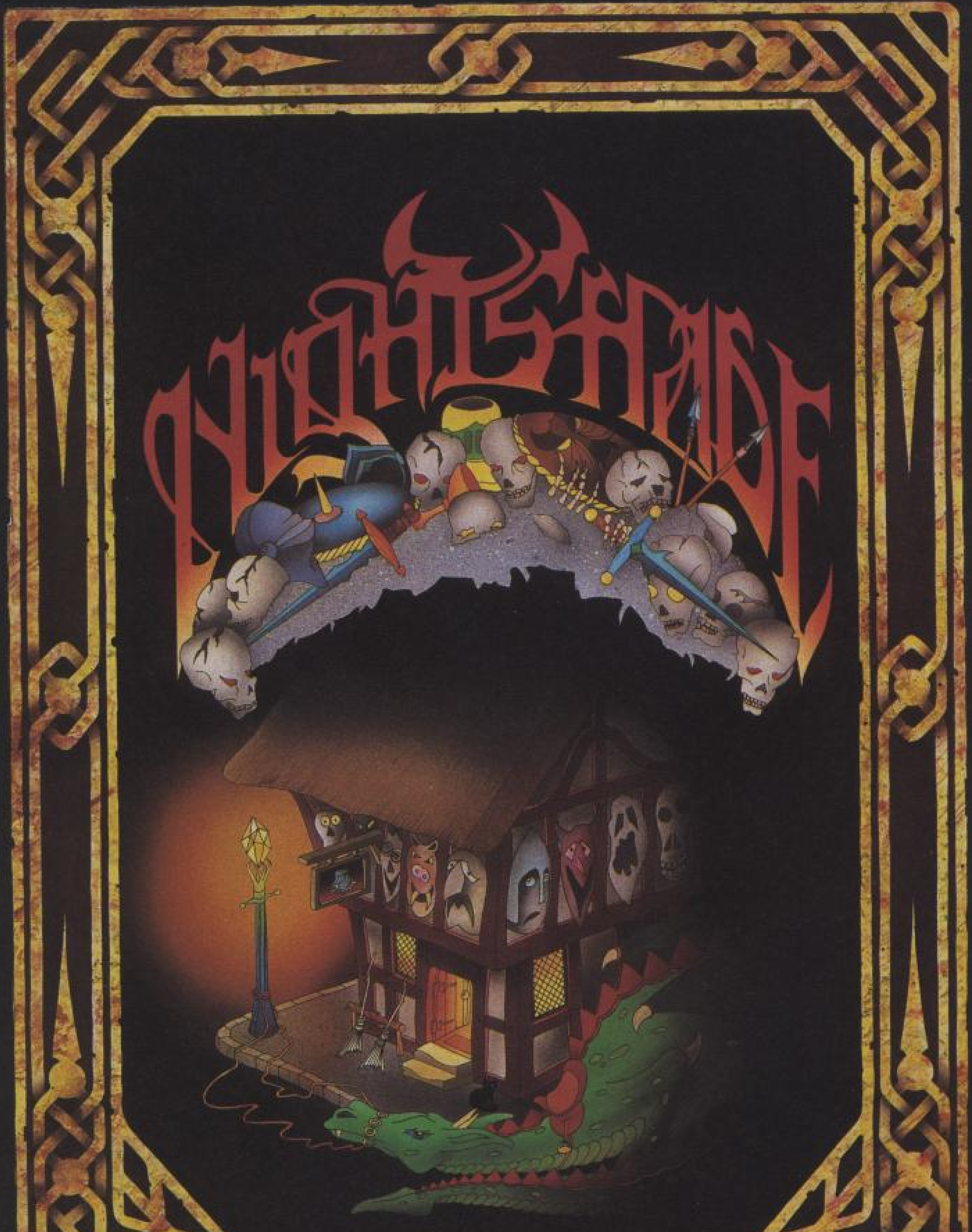
I must admit, that at the time of writing, *Spy v Spy* is one of my favourite games, having played it quite frequently on the CBM. The Spectrum version is every bit as good, if not better. Anyway, these tips were sent in by Charlie Brooker **of Brightwell—Cum—Sotwell (Yeah I've never heard of it either) and they should help you build your ranking up from small fry spy.**

A good strategy to use is to put any secret objects into one specific room and then Booby trap just in case the other spy enters there. It is also a good idea to make sure YOU have a remedy close at hand should you need to go into that room.

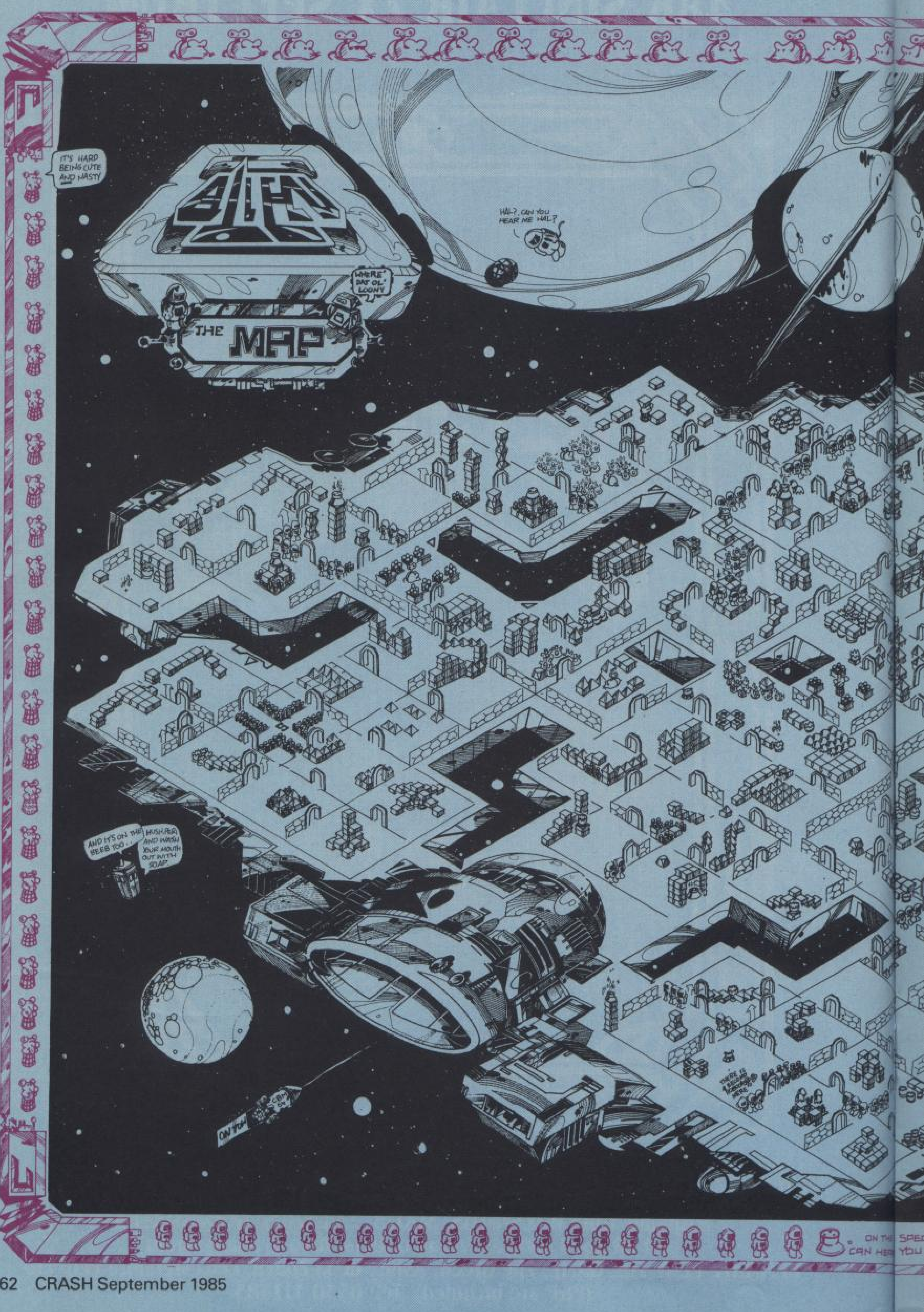
Normally when the computer's spy dies he reappears in the room that you start in. So a good idea is to run quickly into that room and booby trap one of the doors, set a time bomb, run out and booby trap the other door. When the black spy reappears he will happily rummage around that room and if he doesn't get killed by the time bomb then he certainly will be killed by one of the booby-trapped doors.

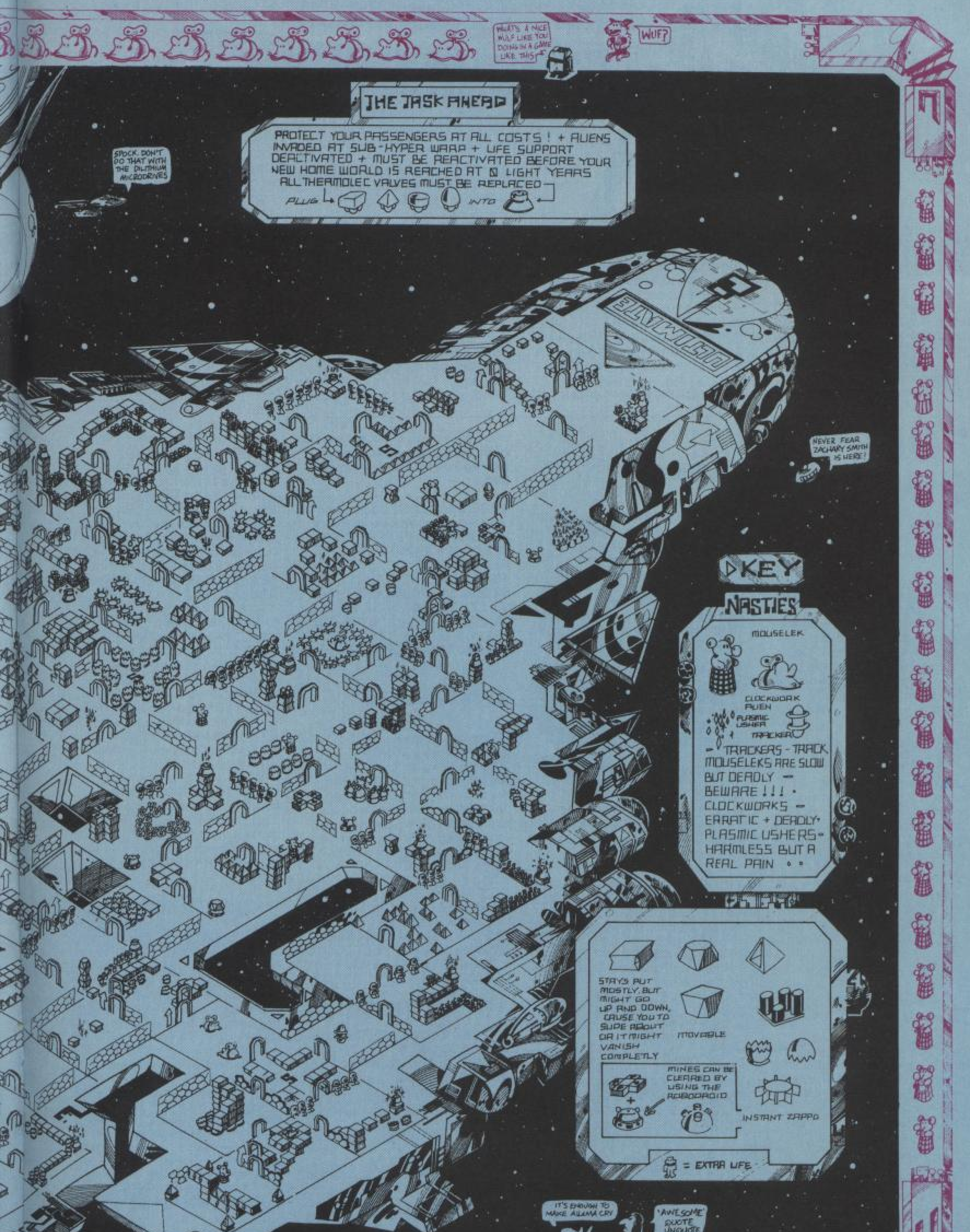
Should you wish to make the game a lot easier then when you are on the selection screen make sure that the airport door will be shown throughout the game. Now start the game. Go and look for the room with the the airport door in it and leave the black spy to find all the necessary objects while you booby trap the door that gives access to the room with the airport door. When the black spy has found all the objects then he will go to the room that you are in, but as soon as he tries to enter it he will be killed by one of the booby traps that you have hidden. Once the spy is dead then all his objects will be dropped in the room that he died in, so you can now and go and pick them all up and escape.

48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



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IT'S HARD BEING CUTE AND NASTY
HAL?, CAN YOU HEAR ME HAL?
WHERE' DAT OL' LOONY
THE MAP
AND IT'S ON THE BEEB TOO..
HUSH, ER, AND WASH YOUR MOUTH OUT WITH SOAP
ON THE SPEC
CAN HEA YOU


WHAT'S A NICE WULF LIKE YOU DOING IN A GAME LIKE THIS
WUF?
THE TASK AHEAD
PROTECT YOUR PASSENGERS AT ALL COSTS ! + ALIENS INVADED AT SUB-HYPER WARP + LIFE SUPPORT DEACTIVATED + MUST BE REACTIVATED BEFORE YOUR NEW HOME WORLD IS REACHED AT 0 LIGHT YEARS
ALL THERMOLEC VALVES MUST BE REPLACED
PLUG INTO
SPOCK, DON'T DO THAT WITH THE DILITHIUM MICRODRIVES
ULTIMATE
NEVER FEAR ZACHARY SMITH IS HERE!
KEY
NASTIES
MOUSELEK
CLOCKWORK ALIEN
PLASMIC USHER
TRACKER
TRACKERS - TRACK. MOUSELEKS ARE SLOW BUT DEADLY — BEWARE !!! CLOCKWORKS — ERRATIC + DEADLY. PLASMIC USHERS — HARMLESS BUT A REAL PAIN
STAYS PUT MOSTLY, BUT MIGHT GO UP AND DOWN, CAUSE YOU TO SLIDE ABOUT OR IT MIGHT VANISH COMPLETLY
MOVABLE
MINES CAN BE CLEARED BY USING THE ROBODROID
INSTANT ZAPPO
= EXTRA LIFE
IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE A LLAMA CRY
'AWESOME' QUOTE UNQUOTE
THE SPECCY NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAM
DRAWN, ETC BY.... WILLIAM OVERTON

PLAYING TIPS

RAID OVER MOSCOW

These tips for one of *US GOLD*'s better conversions for the Spectrum come from Andrew Wilson **of Dartford and they detail how to play every stage of the game.**

In the first screen where you have to steer your ships out of the space hanger, open the doors to the hanger as late as possible because when you do open them your altitude tends to increase but do make sure when you open the doors that you are a reasonable distance from them otherwise you could end up crashing.

In the second Zaxxon-like screen there are two good methods for scoring lots of points but one is more risky than the other:

a) This is the more risky of the two methods because without practising a lot you tend to get killed off quite often. Go up until a missile appears then go quite low and wait for the missile to get ahead of you. Now go back up so that you are level with the missile and shoot it! Just continue with this method until you proceed on to the next screen.

b) As soon as you appear on screen, fly low so as to avoid the oncoming missile. Now, just concentrate on how to destroy the ground targets and helicopters, but remember to stay low down. If you should see a row of trees coming towards you then **Don't Panic**. Shoot at the trees and if your bullets go straight through without hitting anything then you are safe. If your bullets do hit a tree then just move a little to the left or right and fire again to see if your bullets still hit a tree. Just repeat this procedure until the bullets don't hit anything and you should get through alright.

In the screen with the silos, to get the one on the far right, lower your plane until it is almost touching its shadow and then fire at the silo and you should destroy it because you are at the correct height. Now destroy the other silos — except the one in the middle. Once you have done that, get to the same height as the silo in the middle. Now shoot planes etc until there is about 3 seconds to go, now shoot the final silo.

The next screen, Moscow, has eight towers which are to be destroyed. All except two of them are in line with the attacking soldiers. So get yourself lined up with the soldiers and you should be able to get six of the towers etc. Once all eight towers have been shot you will proceed onto the next screen and the final conflict.

When you appear on this screen you will notice that the robot will always move right. You should, after a couple of games, be able to predict the robot's movements and so this makes destroying it a lot easier.

POKES CORNER

As promised here are some more of the better pokes that were entered into the competition, plus some more recent ones sent in. First, though, we will start off with some of the pokes sent in by Richard Thomas **of Redford for, amongst other things,** *3D Lunattack*:

3D LUNATTACK

First of all merge the header then enter as direct commands these pokes, then enter GOTO 2 and restart the tape. When the game has loaded you should have 255 lives.

```
POKE 23792,62
POKE 23793,255
POKE 23794,50
POKE 23795,119
POKE 23796,207
POKE 23797,205
POKE 23798,8
POKE 23799,207
```

ORION

Merge the loader and insert this poke just before the PRINT USR statement and you will have 255 lives.

```
POKE 38059,255
```

SPECTRAL INVADERS

First of all merge the loader and insert the poke in the usual way, just before the PRINT USR statement. Then type run and restart the tape and when the game has loaded you will have 254 lives.

```
POKE 25062,254
```

TAPPER

CRASH's resident hacker, Keith Walker, **has come up with the goods for US GOLD's** *Tapper*. **Just type the routine into your Spectrum, save it to tape, then run and start your** *Tapper* **tape. If, when you run the program it comes up with 'Error in data' then you have made a mistake when typing in the data!**

```
5 REM TAPPER L
10 CLEAR 65535
20 PRINT AT 9,3;"PLAY IN
TAPPER MASTER TAPE";AT
11,9;"FROM THE START"
30 RESTORE
40 LET TOT = 0
50 FOR N = 23296 TO 23390:
READ A: LET TOT = TOT + A:
POKE N,A: NEXT N
60 IF TOT <> 9161 THEN PRINT
AT 0,0; "ERROR IN DATA":
STOP
70 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
100 DATA 237,091,083,092,042
110 DATA 089,092,043,205,229
120 DATA 025,006,003,197,221
130 DATA 033,128,091,017,017
140 DATA 000,175,055,205,086
150 DATA 005,193,016,240,042
160 DATA 083,092,237,075,139
170 DATA 091,205,085,022,042
180 DATA 083,092,237,091,143
190 DATA 091,025,034,075,092
200 DATA 221,042,083,092,237
210 DATA 091,139,091,062,255
220 DATA 055,205,086,005,017
230 DATA 249,096,033,087,091
240 DATA 001,008,000,237,176
250 DATA 033,000,000,034,066
260 DATA 092,062,001,050,068
270 DATA 092,201,013,197,245
280 DATA 090,028,023,002,213
```

AIRWOLF

This splendid set of pokes was sent in by David Gary **and** Ian Walker **both of Bloxham. Just type in the listing exactly as shown (with 45 XX's in the REM statement), run it, then delete lines 20, 30 and 40. Now type in CLEAR 23960 and then RANDOMIZE USR 23760. Now start your** *Airwolf* **tape from the beginning and when it has loaded you will have infinite lives.**

```
10 REM xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
20 BORDER 0: PAPER 0: CLS
30 FOR X = 23760 TO 23803:
READ Z: POKE X,Z: NEXT X
40 DATA 221, 33, 0, 64, 17, 0, 27,
62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5, 210, 208,
92, 221, 33, 192, 93, 17, 63, 162,
62, 255, 55, 205, 86, 5, 175, 50,
165, 179, 50, 166, 179, 62, 195,
50, 195, 179, 195, 195, 230
```

AUTOMANIA

These pokes for the first of the Wally games come from Howard Grist **of Sheffield. Just type the program in and start the tape from the beginning. In line 20 there is an error check routine. If you have made an error when entering the data the program will tell you so when you run it.**

```
10 LET C = 0: FOR A = 23296 TO
23335: READ B: POKE A,B: LET
C = C + B: NEXT A
20 IF C <> 4659 THEN PRINT
"ERROR IN DATA": STOP
30 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
40 DATA 55, 17, 241, 1, 221, 33,
34, 127, 62, 255
50 DATA 205, 86, 5, 48, 241, 243,
62, 201, 50, 60
60 DATA 128, 205, 22, 128, 33,
200, 253, 62, 45, 6
70 DATA 4, 119, 35, 198, 9, 16,
250, 195, 250, 254
```

NODES OF YESOD

In last month's Pokes corner there was a very slight mistake in the *Nodes of Yesod* **pokes. At the end of line 60 there is a 186 change this to 188 and in line 340 change the LEN A$ to LEN B$**

TIR NA NOG

From P Mckeown of N. Ireland

To make Cuchulainn invisible go to Lon Liath and collect all the objects from behind the locked doors and the goblet. Now go to the stone tablet and drop them there. The tablet will now read W,N,E,N,E,7. Follow these directions and then go 7 paces east and drop a spade. You will now receive half of a torc. The other half torc is in the ice cave. When both halves are put together then you are now invisible (the sidhe still send you back to the beginning though). The best use for the torc is for getting past Nathair.

VIEW TO A KILL

From Craig Lemon **of Essex**

The passwords for section two and section three of this game are QRS21 and QQQQQQ




DUN DARACH
The Map
NORTH
WALL
3 GALLERY
SECRET DOOR
MOSS LANE
PORTAL
PORTAL
1 STRONG ROOM
PARK
ROW
WEST WALL
29
DEPOSIT HOUSE
53 DEPOSIT HOUSE
GALLERY 1
DEPOSIT HOUSE
85
HERME HILL
2 PORTAL
LEAF
LANE
86 DEPOSIT HOUSE
HIGH
STREET
BROKER 1
DEPOSIT HOUSE 3
MEAD CROSS
BAKER STREET
LONG
LANE
4 GALLERY
DEPOSIT HOUSE
64
ASSAYER 79
WAY
65 HERALD
4 COBBLERS
START
1 DEPOSIT HOUSE
4 DEPOSIT HOUSE
BROKER 2
DEPOSIT HOUSE 3
WEST
WAY
MARKET
80 BANK
6 BANK
BANK 66
81 BANK
HERME HILL
AMBER
67 PORTAL
THIEVES GUILD
83
MEAD SQUARE
SILVER
STREET
82
ASSAYER
SECRET DOOR
ROAD
DEPOSIT HOUSE
2
MYRE
STREET
LADYOS
2
THE
DEPOSIT HOUSE
42
DOWNS
1 GAMBLING HOUSE
41 GAMBLING HOUSE
15 GAMBLING HOUSE
GAMBLING HOUSE
53
STREET
CROSS
52 BROKER
DICE
OLD QUARTER
CASTLE
GRAY MARKET MERCER HILL
GRAY MARKET THIEVES HILL
ARGOT
IOMAIN
RATHA-DE
THE SOKE
WITH THANKS TO:
ALLAN DIXON
SANDRA FALLOWS
LAURENCE MOLLOY
JULIAN BOWMAN
OLIVER FREY
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HIGH GATE
WEST CASTLE
MARSH GATE
JAIL HOUSE
CASTLE
ROOM OF NO EXIT
CASTLE WALK
N
W
E
S
MERCER 5
THE PARADE
THE PARADE
KING STREET
OAK ROAD
NEW STREET
2 DEPOSIT HOUSE
4 FLETCHER
SWORDSMITH 26
ARMOURER 5
27 CARPENTER
4 FARMER
DEPOSIT HOUSE 12
COOPER 7
DEPOSIT HOUSE 9
LONG LANE
LONG LANE
6 DRAPER
ARCHIVIST
DEPOSIT HOUSE 28
2 GROCER 14
VINTNER
29 SALTER
8 BROKER
BARBER 14
10 SKINNER
30 PORTAL
DEPOSIT HOUSE 38
STREET
12 APOTHECARY
HILL STREET
STREET
MARSH
EAST WALL
37 DEPOSIT HOUSE
32 DEPOSIT HOUSE
APOTHECARY 58
BROKER 31
HEATH ROAD
57 DEPOSIT HOUSE
21 DEPOSIT HOUSE
DEPOSIT HOUSE 33
HERBIST 18
34 GALLERY
CARPENTER 20
DEPOSIT HOUSE 16
CALLS
BIRD STREET
BIRD STREET
3 DEPOSIT HOUSE
MINSTREL
DEPOSIT HOUSE
DEPOSIT HOUSE 55
ALCHEMIST 57
HAIL PARTHOL 22
19 HAIL DANU
23 DEPOSIT HOUSE
HAIL NIDIR 35
ANTIQUARY 59
BANK
S TREET
SECRET DOOR
HILL
STREET
CROSS
58 HAIL BELINUS
DEPOSIT HOUSE 74
STREET
60 DEPOSIT HOUSE
STREET
S TONE
ROAD
STONE
ROAD
71 GALLERY
OLD
73 MAGICK
15 PORTAL
STAR
MAGICK 24
DEPOSIT HOUSE 82
CINDER
75 DEPOSIT HOUSE
25 DEPOSIT HOUSE
DEPOSIT HOUSE 37
MARSH
CLAW LANE
LOCKED SOUTH GATE
SECRET DOOR

PLAYING TIPS

DUN DARACH

This month's set of tips for Gargoyle's classic game are supplied from various sources including: Alistair McCleod of Dunfermline, Craig Young of Central Scotland, S. Summerscales of Batley, Allan Gunn and Jason Partington both of Poole, Lawrence Molloy of Purley, Michael Mitchell and Gary Mackintosh both of Morayshire — and of course, yours truly!.

Open the invisible door in Cross Street, which is opposite room 55, with the M key. Inside is the Telestone, take this. Now go and buy a spell from the Magick store. Deposit your key on the counter and offer the Telestone, this will reveal the location of Skar. Now go and find Skar (keep using the Telestone so that you can easily track her down) and offer her the spell when she is near, this will make her visible. If you have a thieves licence then go and steal the pearl from the strongroom; if you don't have a thieves licence then get some money and buy one, either by honest means or by using the methods detailed last month. Take the pearl and give it to Skar, who, in return will give you a scroll. Go to the castle with the scroll and the d- key.

That's enough tips for Dun Darach for this month but here are the solutions to all of the galleries.

The gallery on the northern part of Herne Hill should have these items dropped in it: an arrow (from the Fletcher in King Street); an adze (from the Carpenter in Oak Road); a hoe (from the Farmer in the Parade) and a needle (from the Draper in Long Lane).

The gallery on the southern part of Herne Hill should have these items dropped in it: lead (from the Alchemist in Cross Street); a last (from the Cobblers in Long Lane); a sting (from the Apothecary in Heath Road) and a hemlock (from the Apothecary in Market Street).

The gallery in Stone Road should have these items dropped in it: a hammer (from the Carpenter in Bird Street); a barrel (from the Cooper in Long Lane); dry salt (from the Salter in Oakroad) and a broad axe (from the Armoury in Long Lane).

The last gallery in Marsh street should have these objects dropped in it: a rue (from the Herbalist in Bird Street); a pile (from the Herald in Amber Way); a razor (from the Barber in New Street) and a foil (from the Sword smith in Oak Road). Remember Pita likes jewellery!

DRAGONTORC

Last month's tips for *Dragontorc* didn't quite make it into this section, owing to lack of space, so here they are along with a couple more tips for the same time: you should now be in Witchwood. Find the message that says 'Batswing, witchleaf, frogleg will reveal' and then collect the bat, the herb and the frog that is in a pool. Now put these into the cauldron and get the wand that floats out. Go next door and use the wand to move the flagstone. Take the elf gem and the spell. Give the elf that wanders around the woods the gem in return for the other half of the Moon Key. Now construct the whole key and take the Full Moon. Deactivate the magic sword with the wand and take it. Now with the magic sword cut down the sapling to make a magic broom with which to sweep the leaves. You should then find a second large stone and a message. 'What full moon reveals take it with steel' this means use the Moon on the stone but don't go without the Moon or magic sword. Before you go, move the other flagstone in the woods for the Light spell. Now proceed to Sanctuary.

You can kill the goblins with the Missile spell and protect yourself against the Demon's missiles with Mantle. If you walk into the Cursed Scroll you are transported to a doorless room. Use the Leyrod to reveal the exit. Uncurse the scroll with the sword to get the message 'The vault of Locris is opened with Sunkey' this is the object you are looking for. One of the goblins has the Sunkey and another has a green chest key which opens three chests. In dark rooms use the light spell. In one of these rooms is a cursed wand use the sword on this to take the curse off which then gives you the message 'I can find what I hid where it is blackest'. Now use the sword on the magic spiders to gain some more spells. Unlock a green chest with the green key to get the message 'One leads to a gate through the other locate'. This is meant to be read in conjunction with the message you get on the Locate spell which you receive when you destroy the winged demon.

Look for two doors side by side — one has an exit cube in it — then you must use Locate inside it to find a green chest which is unlocked by using the green key. Take the cursed key which has a message from inside the chest. The message is 'One lost, one in ruins, one in hell, one cursed' this gives you clues to the whereabouts of each of the crowns. It also gives you the order in which to destroy the crowns. To get to the two doors side by side two keys must be found. One is 'where it is blackest', ie in a dark room. Use the Light spell to light the room and search the room with the wand. The key is on the back wall under a stone carving. Also search the tomb with the Servant for the Wall spell and kill the wraith with the Bane spell. Use the door key to open the locked door by the goblins and inside is a green chest which is opened with the green key. Leave the old door key and take the one that you have just got out of the chest. Now proceed through a dark room and open the locked door, at the other side, with the door key. Go through this door and you should be in the room with the doors side by side.

Use the Fullmoon and the Sunkey to reveal the exit cube and leave with the Sunkey and Cursed key. Now go back to the vaults of Locris.

Once inside the Vaults of Locris, open the locked door with the Sunkey. Now search the tomb with the servant spell and you will find the 'UNDO'. In the next avoid the fireballs and use Bane to kill the nearby wraith. The doorway to the room with the crown in it is cursed. So use the UNDO spell to remove the curse otherwise as soon as you enter the room you will be automatically transported to a room which used to have spiders. Once you have removed a curse (a moon symbol appears) then use the UNDO spell to release the crown and take it. Now use the RETURN spell and place the crown on the anvil and destroy it with the crystal of antithought. You can take the gold remnants for trading with elves.

CYCLONE

From Christopher Kay of Longford

If a Cyclone is brewing up near you and you are near an island that doesn't have a landing pad then it is possible to land on the grass to avoid the cyclone but you don't get refuelled.

FRANK BRUNO

From Nicholas Dauter of London

When asked to input you name enter NIK and using the codes below you can now access two more boxers. The code for Fling Long Chop is OHEIOFHL8 and the code for Andra Puncheredov is FBIIOOFAA. Has anyone got any more codes?

HERBERT'S DUMMY RUN

Following on from last month's tips the rest of the solution was supplied by Andrew Turner of Stoke-on-Trent.

Now get the torch and the bulb; the torch is mended. Go to the dark room, and you should now be able to see in this room. Shoot all the ducks and a couple of rolls of caps should be dropped. Put these somewhere convenient. Get the A brick and the chocolate 10p and go to the screen with the till. Climb on top of the brick and walk past the till with the chocolate 10p, this should now be exchanged for a real 10p. With the 10p and the bomb go to the room with the 10p slot and jump at it. You will now be in a Blitz game, and when this is completed you will receive a cannonball. With this and the rolls of caps go to the room with the cannon and walk through it. The cannonball will be launched and a hole in the wall will be made. Pass through this hole and get the space hopper. Then go back up to get the tennis racket and put the space hopper in a convenient place. Next go into the Breakout room and complete the game. Once the Breakout game is completed you should receive a glove. Get the space hopper and with the glove go to Level 1 to the room with the hand guarding a door. You must now jump into the room behind the hand (the hand will no longer harm you because you have the glove). You will be in a room with Wally and Wilma at the top of an escalator. As you have the space hopper you will be able to jump very high. This means that you can now jump up and switch the escalator on and be reunited with Wally and Wilma.

GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET

From Ben Cons **of London**

To complete the game then the following things must be done after loading: Go to Holland Park at 9.16, to Kilburn at 10.04, Elephant and Castle at 11.40, Holland Park at 13.00, Covent Garden at 13.30, West Kensington at 14.38, and Regent's Park at 15.22.

HYPER SPORTS

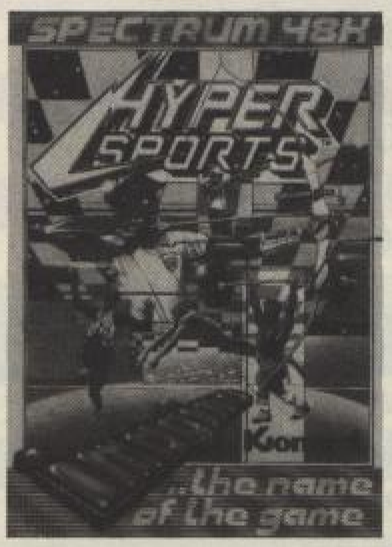
Imagine's latest blockbuster attracts tips from Alan Cowan **of Glasgow.**

In the swimming, when the swimmers line up for the start you should realise that it is only about 3—5 seconds before the start of the race so be prepared. Once the race has started watch for when the first 'breath' sign appears in relation to the distance markers—after a while you will be able to anticipate when you must breathe, and thus speed up your time by wait until your character's legs are almost vertical then press fire again and waggle the joystick like mad. When nearing the ground press fire and pull left so that you land upright. Following these methods you should always qualify for this event.

In the Archery try get the wind as near to 0 as possible (a bit of practice at this and you should be able to get bang on 0 almost every time). Your first arrow should be spent on guaging when it is best to fire so that the arrow hits the bull. Get the angle between 4.8 and 5.2 degrees and a bullseye to get a 'NICE'.

Try to get a very high speed when running, in the Triple jump, and jump at a angle as close as possible to 45 degrees for each jump you have to make.

The weightlifting is probably the hardest event to do really well in, not because of the method but because of the phsyical demands. A really good joystick (like a Kempston) should be used otherwise it is better to use the keyboard and for your first attempts at weightlifting you should try the lighter weights just to make sure you qualify before trying the heavier weights. It is also advisable to have someone else to press the fire button when the barbell flashes.





about a second or more. An alternative to this is to have someone else do the breathing for you.

The skeet shooting is quite a simple event. After a while you will learn the sequences in which the skeets appear and this will improve your shooting. Should you shoot all of the skeets a duck will fly past if you shoot this you will receive a hefty 5000 points bonus and the message Perfect.

The next event, the long horse, is also quite easy to master. Press fire as your man nears the end of the springboard, this will mean that you land quite near the end of the horse. Once on the horse

SKOOL DAZE

From Patrick Cogan **of Carrigaline**

It is possible to hit some of the shields by standing half way up the stairs and firing your catapult. Also the teachers blame whoever is nearest and you get points by making sure that either the swot or the bully get lines from the teachers. This can be done by waiting until either one of them is close to a teacher (closer than you are) and when the teacher's back is turned fire your catapult at him. When the teacher gets up, he will either blame the swot or the bully.

ACTION BIKER

From Andrew Lane **of Ilfracombe**

To be able to go into the lake you will need the snorkel and the periscope. Should you want a longer game then go into the house that your friend's mother is in just before 8 O'clock and the clock will pass 8 O'clock and you will have another 12 hours playing time. Nine times out of ten, Martin can be found in the house that is in the middle of the lake. The spaceport is at the very top of the playing area, so you must either go through the lake or through the dark area to reach it. Find your friend's mum because she will give you 10 sleep points but you can never have more than 50 sleep points.

Again I have filled up my allotted space and so must finish off the column. For those of you who still don't have the address it's printed below.

ROBIN CANDY
CRASH
PO BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE
SY8 IDB

HOTLINE TOP 30 FOR SEPT

1 *(13)* **SPY HUNTER** US Gold
2 *(3)* **ALIEN 8** Ultimate
3 *(14)* **MATCH DAY** Ocean
4 *(1)* **SHADOWFIRE** Beyond
5 *(4)* **KNIGHT LORE** Ultimate
6 *(9)* **DUN DARACH** Gargoyle Games
7 *(2)* **EVERYONE'S A WALLY** Mikro-Gen
8 *(5)* **BRUCE LEE** US Gold
9 *(6)* **STARION** Melbourne House
10 *(17)* **DOOMDARK'S REVENGE** Beyond

The summertime shakeout on the Hotline continues . . . of the eleven new entries last month, no less than seven have plummetted down the chart, each falling twenty five places on average. *Shadowfire* loses top slot to the second biggest internal climber, *Spy Hunter* with *Lords of Midnight* making the biggest jump inside the chart — a 14 place leap. Good news for **Firebird**, with the reappearance of *Booty* but bad news with *Gyron*'s 14 slot fall. *Moon Cresta* also suffers a big fall, losing 12 places. On a brighter note, three games make their Hotline Debut this month: odes of Yesod, *Spy Vs Spy* and *Hypersports*.



11 *(25)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
12 *(16)* **UNDERWURLDE** Ultimate
13 *(10)* **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants
14 *(23)* **MATCH POINT** Psion
15 *(12)* **WORLD SERIES BASEBALL** Imagine
16 *(—)* **HYPERSPORTS** Imagine
17 *(24)* **SKOOL DAZE** Microsphere
18 *(—)* **WIZARDS LAIR** Bubble Bus
19 *(20)* **HERBERT'S DUMMY RUN** Mikro-Gen
20 *(8)* **MOON CRESTA** Incentive

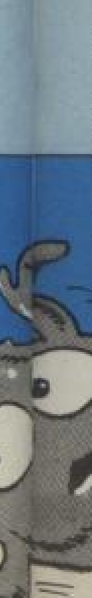
21 *(21)* **DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHALON** Ocean
22 *(—)* **RAID OVER MOSCOW** US Gold
23 *(—)* **SPY Vs SPY** Beyond
24 *(—)* **NODES OF YESOD** Odin
25 *(18)* **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games
26 *(—)* **SABREWULF** Ultimate
27 *(—)* **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
28 *(—)* **BOOTY** Firebird
29 *(15)* **GYRON** Firebird
30 *(26)* **CHUCKIE EGG 2** A&F

This month's HOTLINE Draw winner is **Chris Hall** from Belfast, Northern Ireland, and the four runners up are **Peter Climie** from Glasgow; **David Webb** of King's Lynn; and **Simon Newbery** who hails from Reading in sunny Berkshire.

NEW BRILL 'N' FAB HOTLINE PRIZES!!!

The CRASH HOTLINE & ADVENTURE CHART is Britain's most important popularity chart. It depends entirely on your support and we need your votes. There's now only ONE WAY to submit your votes, and that's by sending them to us in the mail. Use the coupons which normally lurk on page 122 (ish), or a photocopy or even hand-tooled Moroccan parchment to whizz your votes to us.

Remember, every month we draw out ten winning forms, five for each chart and the first out of each sack receives £40 WORTH OF SOFTWARE plus a CRASH T-SHIRT. Then the four runners up in each chart will win their very own CRASH T-Shirt and a CRASH CAP which they can use to impress their friends, make their enemies envious and generally show off with!



ADVENTURE TOP 30 CHART



This month, the Adventure Chart has remained fairly stable. No less than five titles maintain the same position in the chart for the second month running, while most of the internal moves are hops up or down of no more than four or five slots. Out go *Emerald Isle*, *Avalon*, and *Quest for the Holy Grail*, and new release *Dun Darach* comes storming in to take the number one position. Derek Brewster will no doubt be gently chuffed to see *Kentilla* back in the charts — like **Dorcas**'s *Runes of Zendos*, *Kentilla* apparently went on holiday for a month. It remains to be seen what the effect of the new voting system will be next issue...

1 *(—)* **DUN DARACH** Gargoyle Games
2 *(1)* **SHADOWFIRE** Beyond
3 *(2)* **DOOMDARKS REVENGE** Beyond
4 *(6)* **DRAGONTORC** Hewson Consultants
5 *(13)* **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** Mizar
6 *(5)* **LORDS OF TIME** Level 9 Computing
7 *(7)* **WITCHES CAULDRON** Mikro-Gen
8 *(8)* **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
9 *(4)* **COLOSSAL ADVENTURE** Level 9 Computing
10 *(10)* **TIR NA NOG** Gargoyle Games

11 *(9)* **RETURN TO EDEN** Level 9 Computing
12 *(15)* **SPIDERMAN** Adventure International
13 *(19)* **VALKYRIE 17** Ram Jam Corporation
14 *(12)* **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
15 *(—)* **KENTILLA** Micro Mega
16 *(11)* **GREMLINS** Adventure International
17 *(17)* **SNOWBALL** Level 9 Computing
18 *(23)* **EUREKA!** Domark
19 *(—)* **RUNES OF ZENDOS** Dorcas
20 *(16)* **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House

21 *(24)* **TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY** Bug Byte
22 *(27)* **HAMPSTEAD** Melbourne House
23 *(20)* **MOUNTAINS OF KET** Incentive
24 *(25)* **THE HULK** Adventure International
25 *(21)* **ORACLES CAVE** Dorcas
26 *(26)* **GOLDEN APPLE** Artic
27 *(28)* **ESPIONAGE ISLAND** Artic
28 *(29)* **VALHALLA** Legend
29 *(30)* **INCAS CURSE** Artic
30 *(22)* **URBAN UPSTART** Richard Shepherd

Into the ADVENTURE CHART HAT and out we come with the name of . . . **Paul Sargent** of Pinner. **Vincent Emmery** from Dagenham comes second, as does **Peter Bainbridge** of Kettering as well as **Ian Gibson** from Lyneham in Wiltshire.



A CRASH Smash





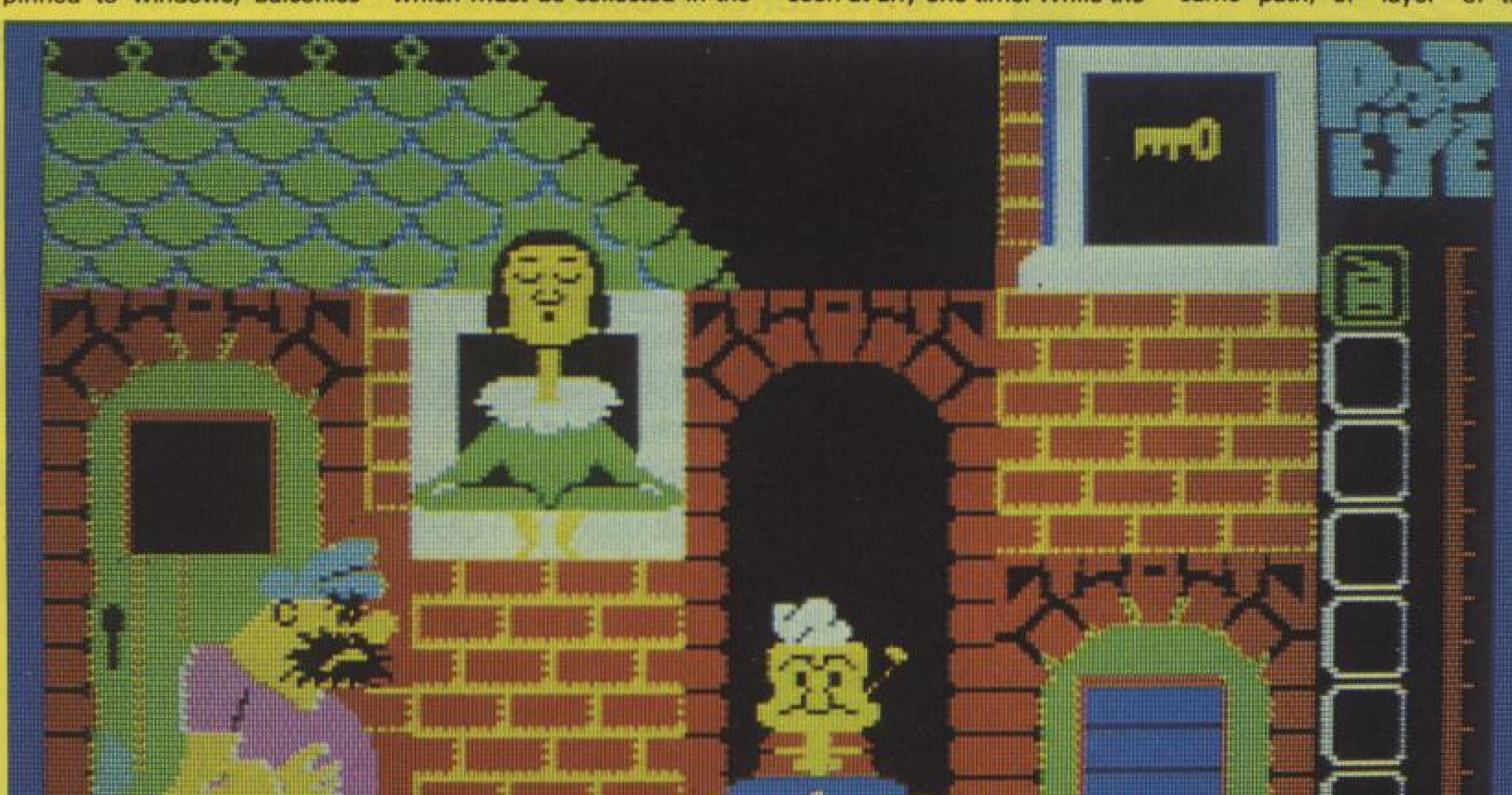
POPEYE

Producer: Dk'Tronics
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Don Priestly**

You should be relieved you didn't hold your breath waiting for this one, after all *Popeye* was announced last Christmas. But in his defence the author, Don Priestly, has been occupied writing and converting the last Dk'Tronics offering, *Minder*.

Popeye loves Olive Oyl, we all know that; it's *why* he does that nobody can explain! But Olive, as always, demands that Popeye should prove his love for her — not least because she is also fancied by Bluto and clearly wants to make the most of the situation. Popeye must win Olive over by collecting twenty five hearts and presenting them to her. The hearts can be found scattered around the town, pinned to windows, balconies and the like. Collecting them would be fun but for Bluto and a great gathering of other hostile beings — witches, giant birds and even dragons. All the meanies want to do Popeye in and, should they manage, the only way he can be revived after an attack is to eat a tin of spinach which must be collected in the same way as the hearts. If he hasn't got a tin handy, then poor old Popeye has had it.

The screen area looks rather like a frame from a comic strip. The characters are very large. Popeye, for example is about half screen height, so not a great deal of the game area can be seen at any one time. While the graphics are not quite 3D the characters can move backwards and forwards allowing them to pass in front of, or behind, other characters or objects. These different layers play a vital part in the game. Popeye could quite happily walk past Bluto so long as they weren't both on the same path, or 'layer' of the





P·O·P·E·Y·E

screen. Bluto is the hardest to deal with because he, unlike the others, can change from one layer to another. The different layers allow Popeye to walk behind buildings which often results in his being obscured from view until he emerges from the other side.

Most of the ground floor items can be collected by positioning Popeye under them and making him jump up. Other objects may be locked away behind doors, and for these you will need to find the appropriate key — each lock has a specific key. To make matters worse Popeye can only carry eight items at any one time, so to be on the safe side try to keep a good stock of spinach and and unload the hearts on Olive as often as you can to leave room for the keys and some other not so obvious items.

To remind you that Olive's love for Popeye is not everlasting, you will notice on the side of the screen along side the eight cells showing Popeye's possessions, a love meter which gradually dwindles as time passes. The meter can be restored by delivering the hearts but Popeye is always under threat of falling out of favour for ever. At the end of the day how Popeye scores with Olive depends on how many hearts he collected and how much time he took.

CRITICISM

● **'Apart from the date on the inlay, 1984, I was also struck by the lack of instructions so it took a while to get into the game. After some time I found it to be pretty enjoyable. The large cartoon graphics are very good, but I would have preferred it if they could have been a little smaller so I could have seen a little more of the playing area at any one time. Popeye reacts very slowly to any direction commands which is a bit of shame since with such a small view of the game the player gets very little warning of impending danger. On the whole though I have enjoyed playing this game and perhaps the lack of instructions added something after all.'**

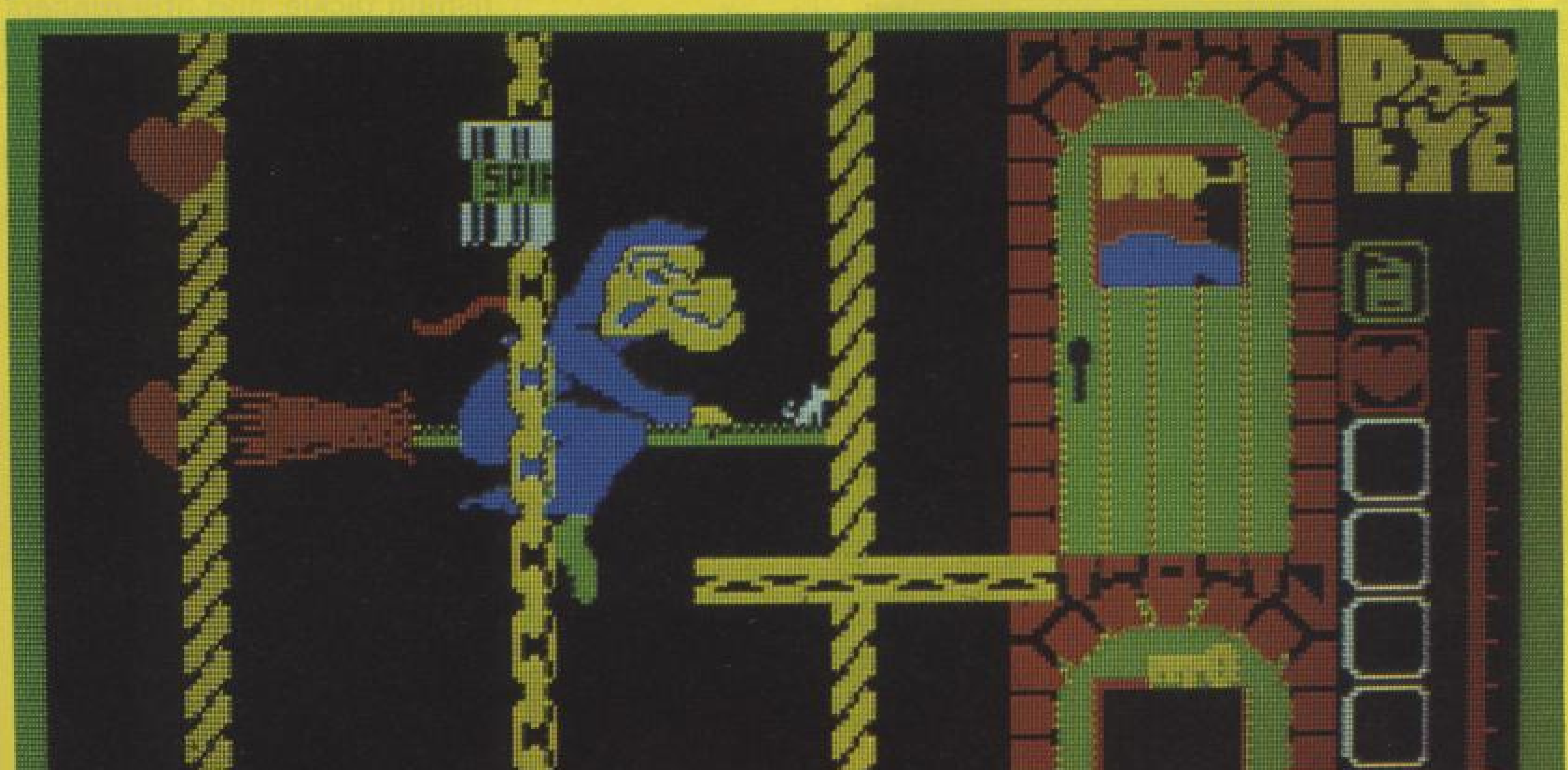
● *'I was rather stunned by the size of the characters in this game; they do work very well indeed, being highly detailed and brightly coloured. In fact one of the things that really struck me was how carefully the game had been designed to hide the attribute problems — I could see how it had been done but the overall effect was very good indeed. I love it when Popeye gets knocked down with his legs flying about, and the tin of spinach appearing from stage right and emptying itself into his mouth. I dare say all of the clever shadowing and masking has slowed this game down quite a lot. Perhaps that doesn't really matter given the type of game that it is, but I did find Popeye annoyingly slow to respond. Graphically a very impressive game that is playable but slightly frustrating due to its lack of speed.'*

● 'Popeye is not an obvious theme for a game but DK'Tronics have done wonders with it. What first strikes you is the very large characters in the game. This is not to say that they are chunky, in fact they are well detailed. Secondly, I noticed how colourful the graphics are — "oh dear there are going to be a large amount of attribute problems" was my immediate reaction. Well I was amazed to see no problem at all; for the first time masses of colour has been used and with no colour clash. To say the least, I've never seen anything like it. Animation is also wonderful. The game plays well, with some complex ideas put into it. Collecting keys is difficult enough, but trying to find which doors they fit is even more of a nightmare. Doesn't Olive Oyl liked to be loved! She thrives on the difficult-to-get love hearts — what a state to get into! It's nice to see a game without any violence, and it should go down well with the Mums and Dads. A very well finshed game that proves that even the impossible can be done with a clever bit of programming. Brilliant! Buy it to believe it.'

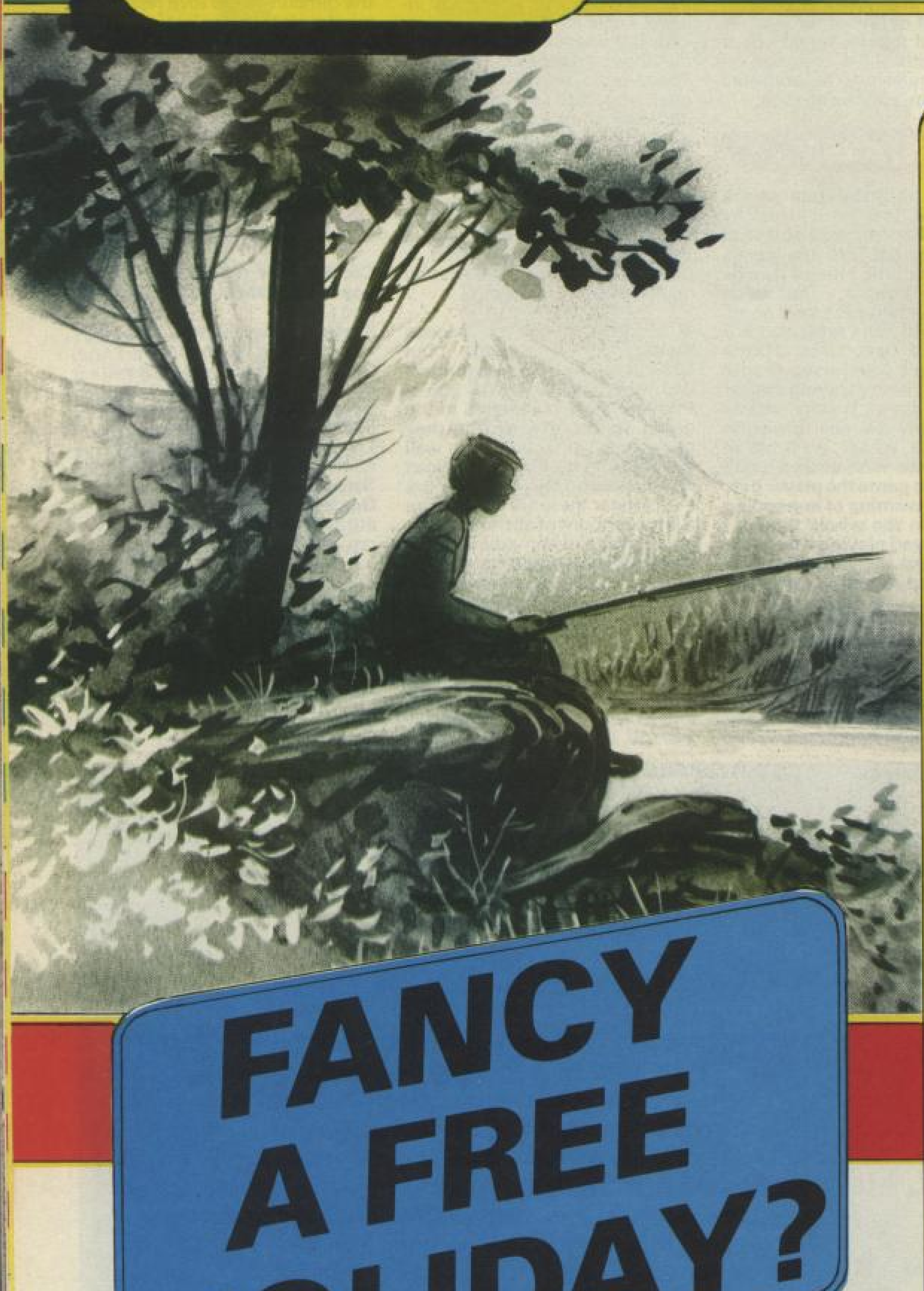
COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2 and Cursor
Keyboard play: slow to respond
Use of colour: exceptional
Graphics: large and bright without clash
Sound: very useful
Skill levels: one
Lives: collected by gathering spinach
Screens: 15
General rating: A very attractive, cunningly programmed game

Use of computer	72%
Graphics	92%
Playability	86%
Getting started	65%
Addictive qualities	92%
Value for money	88%
Overall	**90%**



COMP



FANCY A FREE HOLIDAY?

Play Jack Charlton's 'Spot the Fish' with Alligata and you could be in with a chance!

ALLIGATA have decided to mark the launch of their game JACK CHARLTON'S MATCH FISHING with a competition, open to all CRASH readers between the age of 9 and 21.

It's not that we're being ageist, chaps and chapesses, but if you win the first prize — an adventure holiday — you'll just have to fit into that particular age range. Comparative youngsters and oldsters can still enter this competition, but they will have to be excluded from winning the First Prize.

The second prize is not to be sneezed at — a full set of fishing tackle, and fifty runners up will pick up a copy of the board game version of JACK CHARLTON'S MATCH FISHING. Not a bad deal all round — you only have to be a CRASH reader to enter, and needn't actually own a Spectrum to enjoy your prize if you win!

Printed on the opposite page is a selection of little swimmy beasties — but they're nameless. What you've got to do is discover the correct name for each of the denizens of the deep weedy water illustrated on the competition coupon, AND work out which of them doesn't feature in Jack's Game. But to make it easier for you, poor dears, slaving away at all our competitions, we've even printed the names of fifteen fish to help you get your hooks in!

Out with those illustrated guides to the finned world, and get on with a bit of scale-spotting......



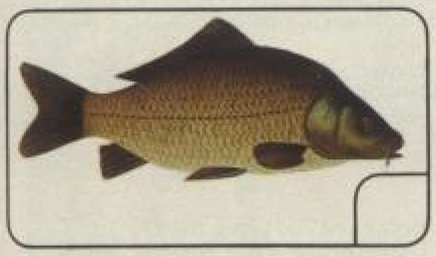
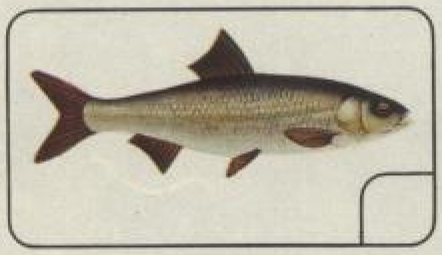
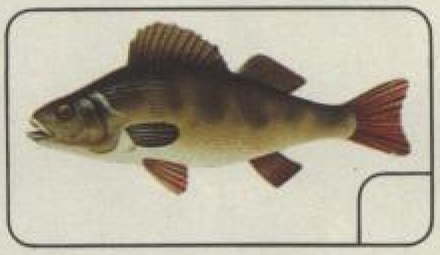
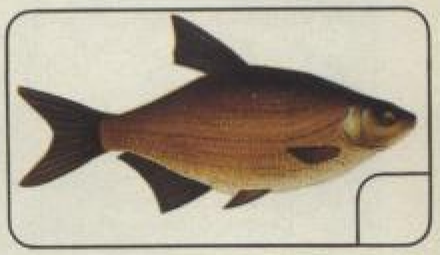
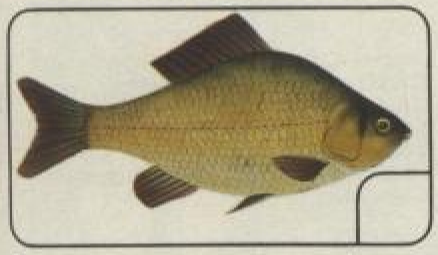
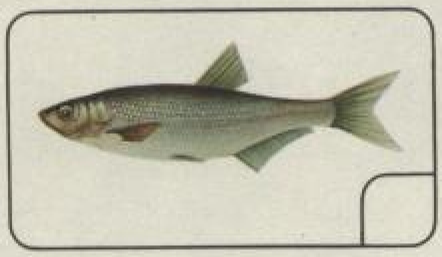
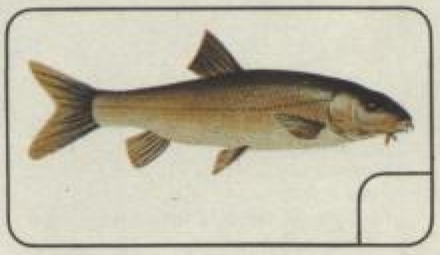
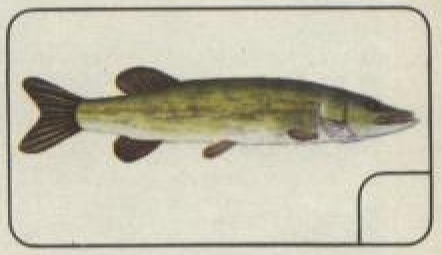
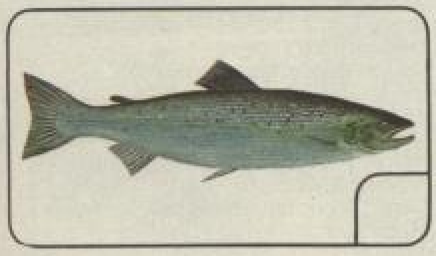
Jack Charlton's MATCH FISHING

Competition

Simply identify the following fish from the list below and place the correct identifying letter in the box provided against illustration.
Complete the competition by entering in the area provided the name of which of the illustrated fish does not appear in the game 'Jack Charlton's Match Fishing'.
Then enter your name, address and age and return to
Alligata Software Ltd., 1 Orange Street, Sheffield S1 4DW.

Rules

1. All entries must be received by Alligata Software Ltd. no later than Friday 24th January 1986.
2. The draw for prizes will be made by Jack Charlton no later than 28th February 1986.
3. Because of restrictions on Alligata Software Ltd. only persons between the ages 9 yrs and 21 yrs may go on the Adventure Holiday – 1st prize. This will be taken before the 31st May 1986, to be decided at the discretion of Alligata Software Ltd.
4. All employees of Alligata Software Ltd., their advertising agents and Newsfield Publications are not eligible to enter the competition.

A Bleak
C Dace
E Common Carp
G Tench
I Rudd
K Chubb
M Bream
O Grayling

B Barbel
D Perch
F Salmon
H Pike
J Crucian Carp
L Roach
N Gudgeon

The fish illustrated above that does not appear in Jack Charlton's Match Fishing is ____________
(complete in block capitals please)
Name ____________
Address ____________
____________ **Postcode** ____________
Age ____________

Catch a Fabulous Prize

First Prize

Adventure Holidays

Win a week's adventure holiday packed with outdoor fun and sporting activities. Lots of laughs, lots of excitement – some of it to be spent with Jack Charlton himself.



Second Prize

Fishing Outfit

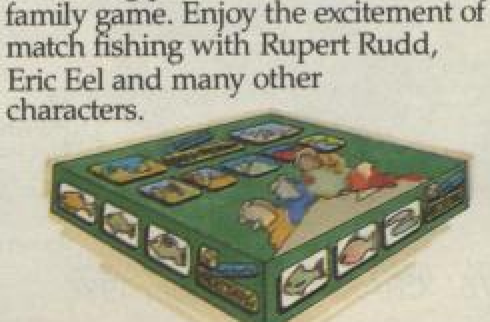
You know your fish now we'll set you on your way to catching the real thing – rod, reel, keep net, basket, umbrella and of course a few hints from Jack.



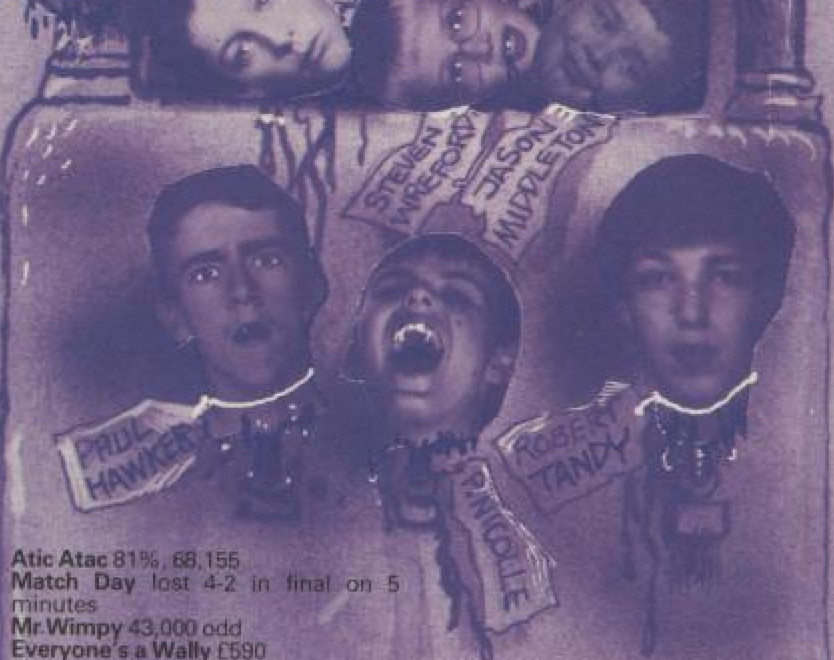
50 Runner-Up Prizes

Jack Charlton's Match Fishing Board Game

50 exciting prizes of this brand new family game. Enjoy the excitement of match fishing with Rupert Rudd, Eric Eel and many other characters.







Rocky Horror Show Nearly completed
Football Manager won FA CUP 6 times on the trot
Caesar the Cat caught 7 mice
Airwolf got three scientists
Manic Miner completed
Android 2 completed
Jetpac 81,680
Mark Watson, Astley, Manchester

Lunar Jetman 103,550
Meteor Storm 25,850
Beach Head 100,000, level 3
Olympimania 4 Golds, 1 Silver
Sabre Wulf 95% completed
Bruce Lee 492,075, completed
Gareth Owen, Craigavon, Northern Ireland

We did all the events in Hypersports twice, and our score was 136,862. We did all the events twice.
Christopher Patterson and Chris Holt, Manchester

Booty 54 pieces
Pyjamarama 55%
Jet Pac 117,250
Bugaboo 59 seconds
Chuckie Egg 215,550
Spy Hunter 127,735
Alien 8 7 chambers
Paul Crimmins, Earlsdon, Coventry

Airwolf collected a scientist
Match Day 16-0 on a 5 minute match
Skool Daze completed one term
Stop the Express Stopped the express
Raid Over Moscow 85,600
Atic Atac 95% completed
Kung Fu Black Belt, 2nd Dan
Stephen Wreford, Heavitree, Exeter

Shadowfire completed
Knight Lore completed 89%
Rocky Horror Show completed
Alien 8 completed 94%
Doomdark's Revenge completed
Wizard's Lair completed, 67%
Paul Wheelhouse, Ossett, W Yorks



Atic Atac 81%, 68,155
Match Day lost 4-2 in final on 5 minutes
Mr.Wimpy 43,000 odd
Everyone's a Wally £590
Pole Position 111,000
Andrew Byatt, Woolston, Cheshire

Kokotoni Wilf 35 objects collected
Jumping Jack Level 6
Full Throttle first at Donnington and Sweden
Alien 8 2 chambers deactivated
Ant Attack 6 girls saved
David Ryder, Uckfield, Essex

Airwolf 8 scientists
Alien 8 91% complete
Starstrike 1,236,100
Everyone's a Wally Wally's pay £690; Wilma's pay £620; Tom's pay £310; Dick's pay £350; Harry's pay £560
Andrew Tarbatt, Atherton, Manchester

Wizards Lair 98% completed
Tapper 283,725
Chuckie Egg 274,300, Level 24
Chuckie Egg 2 1 egg delivered, score 244,484 with seven men remaining
Bruce Lee 806,325, defeated 12 wizards
Pogo 138,475, level 16
Tir Na Nog completed
Beach Head 108,000, completed
Robert Tandy, Stoke, West Mids

Project Future 13,752
Spiderman completed
Finders Keepers completed
Alchemist completed
Kokotoni Wilf completed
Action Biker completed with 180 points
David Poulson, Gravesend, Kent

Manic Miner level 13
Hunchback last screen
Election reached No 10
Sabre Wulf completed at 94%
and my sister scored 10,652 on Pinball
Jason Middleton, Sutton in Ashfield

Knight Lore completed
Boulderdash completed levels 1, 2 and 3 in one game (forgot to take down score!)
Lunar Jetman 203,810
Wanted: Monty Mole completed
Bluce Ree completed 13 times in one game
Gavin Stoddart, Armadale, W Lothian

Hunchback 2 Level 7
Harrier Attack 38,712
Lazy Jones cleared twice
Pyjamarama completed
P Nicolle, Haywards Heath, W Sussex

Knight Lore 56%
Rocky Horror Show completed
Wriggler reached mansion
Hobbit completed
Penetrator completed 12 times
Brian Bloodaxe completed 1st task
Fred Level 3
Technician Ted 4 tasks
Steven Pigott, Blackpool, Lancs

Moon Cresta 34,760
American Football beat computer, 51-37
World Series Baseball beaten computer on easy
Chris Bean, Cheadle, Cheshire

Bruce Lee 382,725, killed wizard 6 times
Ghostbusters finished whole game on second ever go
World Series Baseball beat computer 63-7 in 9 innings
Jeff Talbot, Weybridge, Surrey

Beach Head 120,000
3D Starstrike 368,300
Raid Over Moscow 334,600
Paul Hawker, Folkestone, Kent

Booty 102 items
Glass Starfighter, with 28,000 approx
Jet Set Willy completed
Urban Upstart completed
Kokotoni Wilf completed
Orbiter 300,000 approx
Brian Doble, Cwmbran, Gwent

Trashman 15,527
Zzoom 98,750
Spy Hunter 157,905
Cookie completed cake
Raid Over Moscow 180,000, destroyed city (5 pilots)
Match Day 19-0 in final
James 'Woof' Barker, Bolton

Tapper 257,840 from Level 1
Spy Hunter 5,420,350 (I cheated a bit!)
Match Day beat computer in final, 14-9
Airwolf 3 scientists
Beach Head 200,800, completed on all levels
Blue Max landed to refuel 17 times
Formula One 1st at Silverstone over 5 laps
Hyper Sports Swimming 24.76; Shooting 9400; Vault 9.99; Archery 4,200; Triple Jump 18'47''; Weight Lifting 240 Kg, Heavy weight
Andrew Hill, Pinner, Middlesex

Bruce Lee 2nd Level, 086275
Daniel Briggs-Price, Newark, Notts

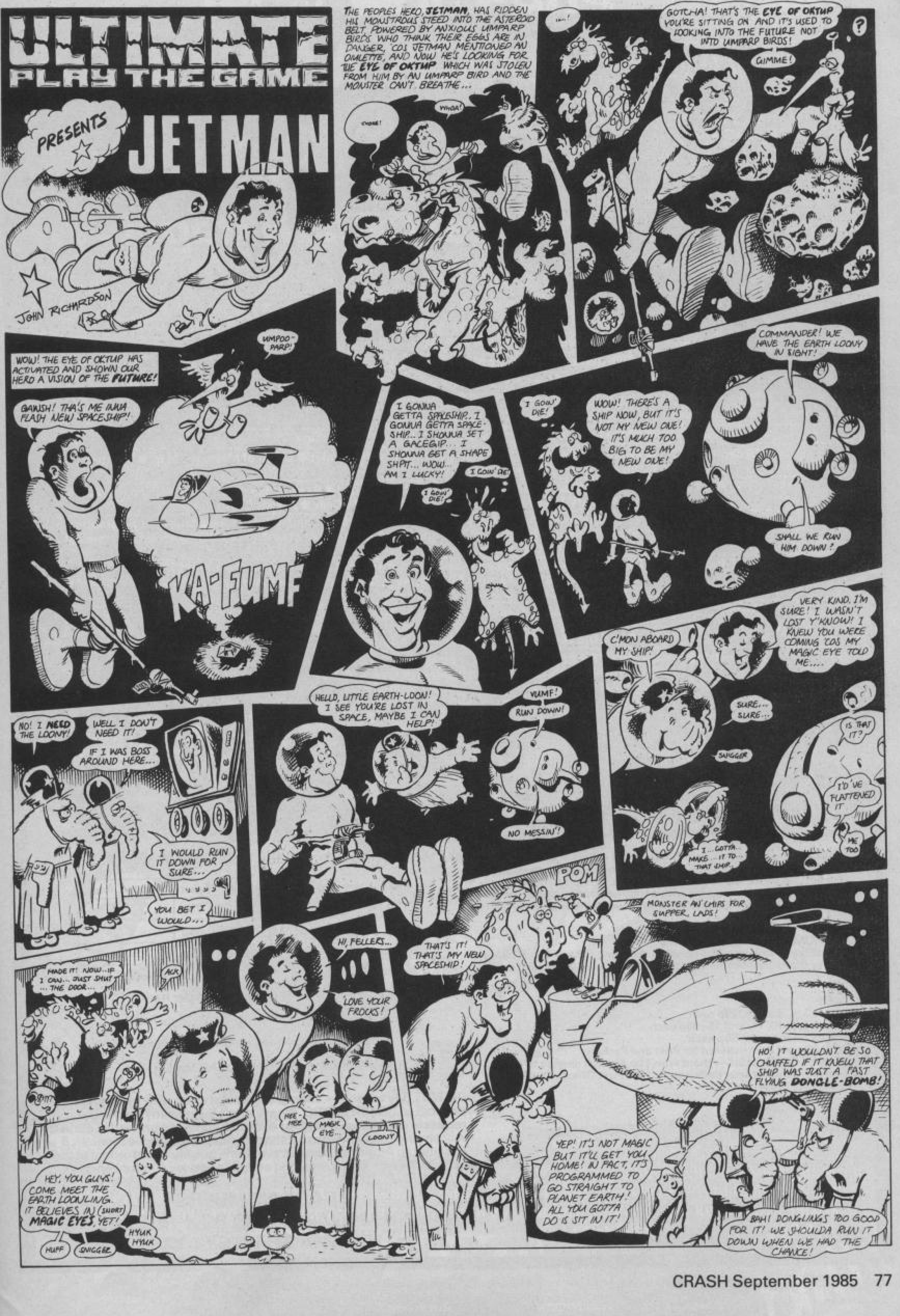
Tapper 423,700, easy level, (2nd day)
Raid Over Moscow completed, 5 men survived
Fall Guy back to start
Kung Fu Black Belt, 7th Dan
Colin Macrae, Cumbernauld, Glasgow

Jet Pac 131,275
Bruce Lee 2,128,925 — completed 30 times (I didn't cheat)
Robert Doole, Ipswich, Suffolk

Manic Miner completed
Hall of Things 4 rings, 566 points
Airwolf 3 scientists
Gary Sumpter, Smethwick, West Mids

Atic Atac 98% completed
Dangermouse in DT saved world 4 times
Sabre Wulf 94% completed
Pyjamarama 98% completed
Ian Croft, Chorley, Lancs




ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME
PRESENTS
JETMAN
JOHN RICHARDSON
THE PEOPLES HERO, JETMAN, HAS RIDDEN HIS MONSTROUS STEED INTO THE ASTEROID BELT, POWERED BY ANXIOUS UMPARP BIRDS WHO THINK THEIR EGGS ARE IN DANGER, 'COS JETMAN MENTIONED AN OMLETTE, AND NOW HE'S LOOKING FOR THE EYE OF OKTUP WHICH WAS STOLEN FROM HIM BY AN UMPARP BIRD AND THE MONSTER CAN'T BREATHE...
WHOA!
GOTCHA! THAT'S THE EYE OF OKTUP YOU'RE SITTING ON AND IT'S USED TO LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE NOT INTO UMPARP BIRDS!
GIMME!
?
UMPOO-PARP!
WOW! THE EYE OF OKTUP HAS ACTUATED AND SHOWN OUR HERO A VISION OF THE FUTURE!
GAWSH! THA'S ME INNA FLASH NEW SPACESHIP!
KA-FUMF
I GONNA GETTA SPAKESHIP.. I GONNA GETTA SPACE-SHIP...I SHONNA SET A GACEGIP... I SHONNA GET A SHAPE SHPIT... WOW... AM I LUCKY!
I GON' DIE!
I GON' DIE!
I GON' DIE!
WOW! THERE'S A SHIP NOW, BUT IT'S NOT MY NEW ONE! IT'S MUCH TOO BIG TO BE MY NEW ONE!
COMMANDER! WE HAVE THE EARTH LOONY IN SIGHT!
SHALL WE RUN HIM DOWN?
NO! I NEED THE LOONY!
WELL I DON'T NEED IT!
IF I WAS BOSS AROUND HERE...
I WOULD RUN IT DOWN FOR SURE...
YOU BET I WOULD...
HELLO, LITTLE EARTH-LOON! I SEE YOU'RE LOST IN SPACE, MAYBE I CAN HELP!
VUMF!
RUN DOWN!
NO MESSIN'!
VERY KIND. I'M SURE! I WASN'T LOST Y'KNOW! I KNEW YOU WERE COMING 'COS MY MAGIC EYE TOLD ME....
C'MON ABOARD MY SHIP!
SURE... SURE...
SNIGGER
IS THAT IT?
I'D'VE FLATTENED IT
ME TOO
I... GOTTA... MAKE... IT TO... THAT SHIP...
MADE IT! NOW...IF I CAN... JUST SHUT ... THE DOOR...
ACK
HI, FELLERS...
LOVE YOUR FROCKS!
HEE-HEE
MAGIC EYE...
LOONY
HEY, YOU GUYS! COME MEET THE EARTH LOONLING. IT BELIEVES IN (SNORT) MAGIC EYES, YET!
HUFF
SNIGGER
HYUK HYUK
POM
MONSTER AN' CHIPS FOR SUPPER, LADS!
THAT'S IT! THAT'S MY NEW SPACESHIP!
YEP! IT'S NOT MAGIC BUT IT'LL GET YOU HOME! IN FACT, IT'S PROGRAMMED TO GO STRAIGHT TO PLANET EARTH! ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS SIT IN IT!
HO! IT WOULDN'T BE SO CHUFFED IF IT KNEW THAT SHIP WAS JUST A FAST FLYING DONGLE-BOMB!
BAH! DONGLINGS TOO GOOD FOR IT! WE SHOULDA RUN IT DOWN WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE!

CRASH ZX SPECTRUM

BACK NUMBERS

fill that CRASH Gap.....

3 April 84	● 'Missile Command' games ● Living Guide ● Sinclair Talks ● Code Name Mat
4 May 84	● The Quill utility ● Graphics utilities ● Microdrive ● 'Pengo' games ● Living Guide
5 June 84	● New Generation ● Jet Set Willy Map ● 'Panic' games ● Alphacom printer
6 July 84	● 3D in games ● Atic Atac Map 1 ● Specgraf ● 'Pacman' games
8 September 84	● Tir Na Nog ● Downsway & Comcon i'face ● White Lightning graphics utility ● Martin Wheeler ● Antic Map ● Design Design ● Lothlorien
9 October 84	● Games Workshop ● Dk'Tronics
10 November 84	● Battlefield Joystick — comparisons ● Deus Ex Machina
11 December 84	● Music Typewriter ● Sureshot j'stick ● Hisoft Ultrakit ● Lords of Midnight Map ● Wanted: Monty Mole Map ● Pyjamarama Map
15 April 85	● London Underground Map (!) ● Designer's Pencil ● Backpackers Map ● Technician ted Map ● Sinclair Story 1 ● Chris Sievey ● Scott Adams ● Mizar ● Artist: David Rowe
16 May 85	● Sports simulations roundup ● Sinclair Story 2 ● Firebird ● Incentive ● Light Magic graphics utility ● music utilities ● Underwurlde Map 1 ● Bruce lee map ● Sabre Wulf Map ● Everyone's A Wally Map ● Artist: Godfrey Dowson
17 June 85	● Denton Designs ● Frankie ● Spectrum surgery ● Sinclair Story 3 ● Knight Lore Map 1 ● Underwurlde Map 2 ● Tape to Microdrive ● Leonardo graphics utility ● Datel sound sampler ● Artist: David Thorpe
18 July 1985	●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in Issue 8●Gyron map of Atrium●Modems round-up ●And the cover that had the Jehova's Jumping!
19 August 1985	*WITHOUT PAGES 123, 124, 125 and 126. WITH:* ●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC Compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire



Issues 2, 7, 12, 13 and 14 are now out of stock

Back issues are going fast — better get your orders in quick. It's probably worth telephoning if you want to order early issues, as we're getting short. And if you missed Issue 19, we can now complete the gap in your collection with a trimmed down version, which has a tasteful sticker added to the front cover announcing the fact!

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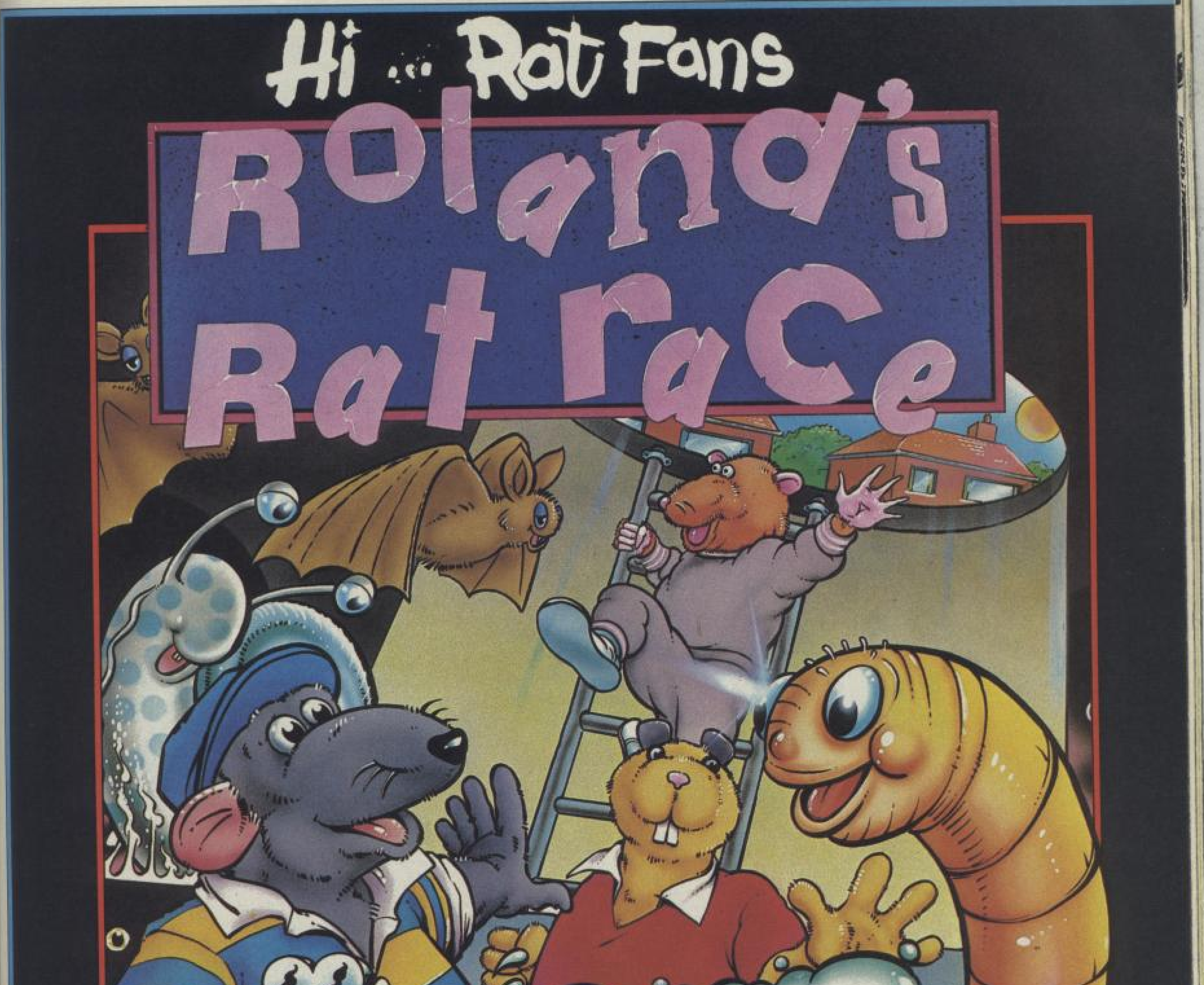
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BACK NUMBERS
CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB



Yeh, it's me, your favourite Superstar, in my first-supa-game! I'll need all your help to find my furry friends in the nasty Rodent World where all kinds of monster meanies live. Hurry now, and I'll see you on your screen, from your cuddly, adorable me, Roland Rat, Superstar.

NEW

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Crash Competition

IN THE LUNAR CAVERNS

A Game in many screens, featuring a Right Charlie . . . .

No, I'd give up the idea of writing the definitive Moon Cave game — **Odin** have beaten you to it with *Nodes of Yesod*, which achieved CRASH Smash status last issue. And in case you were wondering, Odin did get permission to print those tasteful CRASH Smash stickers they put on their boxes — they were distributing the game while the magazine was being printed, so some of you might well have seen the CRASH Smash sticker on Nodes before you'd had a chance to read the review. (If you got a chance to read it at all, that is, but we won't say much more about that right now.)

Starring the Hon Charlemange 'Charlie' Fotheringham Grunes, *Nodes of Yesod* is one of the most entertaining ten quid's worth of software you could buy right now. It's dead good, you node. All this sublunar activity in search of alchiems. Keeps a chap on his toes. Next month, our illustrious Art Supremo, Oli Frey has plans to produce the definitive map of *Nodes of Yesod* — work is already gently under way. And the chaps at Odin, when they heard this, thought it was only fair to encourage you lot to have a go at mapping the game for yourselves before the version in glorious Olicolour hits the streets at the end of September.

Sooo, they're offering fifty copies of their NEXT game for the Spectrum as prizes for the fifty best *Nodes* maps. Can't be bad. *Robin O' the Wood*, is what they're going to be calling their next game, so it seems, and from what Jeremy Spencer and the evil Graeme Kidd brought back from Liverpool the other day, it looks dead good. (Should result in lots of dead Normans too. Funny, I had an uncle called Norman once. He lived in Droitwich, and my auntie — that's his wife — was a member of the WAAF during the last war, as I remember. Funny old world, eh?)

Now we appreciate you haven't got an awful lot of time on your hands, with this mapping competition . . . only a month, if you've got this copy of CRASH promptly. But what we want is a pretty map of *Nodes*, to arrive in the office before 26th September. And before you start saying, 'Oli doesn't know how to map it and is only waiting for the entries to come flooding in before he starts work', I'd just like to point out that Oli's map will have to go off to be prepared for printing on 31st August, according to the schedules the Evil Kidd keeps threatening everyone with. So you can pack that line of thought into a brown paper bag and chuck it away. Right now. OK? Good.

'I don't think we need too many rules on this one, do we Carruthers?'
'Certainly not, old man. Charlie Fotheringham Grunes wouldn't want it that way.'

NODES OF YESOD

Get mapping, peoples — fifty best entries win an Odin Goodie bag, containing a copy of *Robin O' the Wood* amongst other things . . . you'll just have to win one to find out.

Entries to **OLI's NOT CHEATING, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AQ** to arrive before drawing day — the competition, creeps not Oli's map — which is 26th September.

1985 in case there's any confusion. And if you want your masterpiece of mapping returned to you, include return postage, won't you? The tea kitty simply won't stand another hammering this month, what with all the styling mousse we've had to buy the ZZAP! reviewers — funny lot, you know — they could achieve the same tonsurial (LM's LWD) effect by sticking their fingers in an electric socket every morning . . . but they won't, sadly.


Make capital out of your cartographic capabilities!
D COMPETITION



CRASH COURSE

by Rosetta McLeod

CRASH COURSE FORUM!

Q: I am writing to congratulate you on your educational programs column CRASH COURSE — but, you don't seem to realise that it isn't only the lower age group who can benefit from programs like this. There are many of us fourteen year olds struggling with exam courses. We could well do with a bit of help from our Spectrums. Why don't you include some more CSE/O Level type programs in Crash Course?

Barnaby

A: ***Sorry to take so long to reply to your question, Barnaby. I wholly agree with you that people of your age can benefit from educational programs, but unfortunately I'm not sent very many programs of the type you mention, and of those I do see, there are few I would really recommend. The vast majority of the software I am sent for review is for young children, and sadly, many software houses don't seem very keen to produce the sort of programs that older children, say from ten to sixteen, find interesting and worthwhile. The only CSE†O Level type program that stands out in my mind among those I've looked at, is Softlee Systems*** *French Listening Comprehension* ***(reviewed in July's Crash Course), which includes an aural element.***

Unfortunately, some programs like this that I've been enthusiastic about, are not to be found in the shops because distributors are reluctant to take on products from smaller software houses — even though they often have much better ideas than the giants. You can often only buy these programs through mail order, but this of course means that sales are often very limited and some small companies no doubt find it hard to make a living.

Q: Do you know of any educational adventures for eight to nine year olds? I would like to try some adventure programs with my class, but the educational ones I've seen are rather boring, and the commercial games for the adult market are too difficult. Any suggestions?

Mr C Taylor

A: ***Read on! The review below of Turtle's*** *Jack in Crazyland* ***might give you some ideas. The trilogy —*** *Jack in Magicland, Jack in Crazyland* ***and*** *Jack and the Pirates* ***(under production) — has been written by Mr P Rogers, a primary school teacher, and each are ideal for use in schools, particularly as the basis for project work.***

Q: My little boy attends a playgroup where the mothers help on a rota basis. After a fund raising event, we have acquired a Spectrum Plus. Can you recommend any programs which could be used with all the children working together?

Mrs L A Reid

A: ***As I'm sure you realise, most of the software for pre-school children is aimed at the individual child for use in the home. However, Softlee Systems have now produced a Nursery Rhymes program which would be ideal for your needs. I'll be reviewing this in detail next month, but briefly, the idea is that the tape is played through stereo equipment so that the children can hear the nursery rhymes being read very slowly and at the same time see the words being highlighted on the screen.***

Don't miss next month's Crash Course, when I'll be reviewing, among other goodies, a new program for BABIES!

Softlee Systems, 35 Windy Arbour, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2AT

Turtle Software, Bridge Street Mills, Witney, Oxon OX8 6YH

AND DON'T FORGET CRASH MAIL ORDER can usually help!

JACK IN CRAZYLAND



Producer: Turtle Software
memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Age range: **6—12 years**
Author: **P Rogers**

The seven children were engrossed. Grouped around the Spectrum, they had their eyes fixed intently on the screen as one of them read out the screen text.

Andrew: (reading) You have entered a deep ravine which is littered with bleached bones. As you move round the ravine you are suddenly confronted with a band of vicious little sand gremlins! They demand all the water you. . . .
Chorus of voices: Oh no! It took us ages to work out how to fill the bottle!
Andrew: It's either GIVE, FIGHT or RUN
Martin: FIGHT!
Lilian: No! We'll get killed!
Martin: But we can use the sword.
Brenda: I think we should RUN.
Stephen: Yes, Type in RUN.
Voices: No! Not yet! . . . FIGHT . . . GIVE
Stephen: (standing up and blocking the screen) Now, we're not in complete agreement. We need to discuss the alternatives and then take a vote.

I could have intervened at this point but, stifling a laugh at Stephen's ability to assume control, I decided to bide my time. I had asked a class of eleven and twelve year olds to have a look a Jack in Crazyland, and had been invited along to their school to see them at work on the game. I have long been



aware of the useful role that adventure programs can play in education, and had been greatly impressed by the first *Jack* adventure - *Jack in Magicland* (reviewed in June's Crash Course). My own view was that the sequel was even better, but as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, I always ask the real consumers — the children themselves — for their opinions.

The children had by now reached agreement about the option to choose — FIGHT — reasoning that the possession of a sword pointed to this choice. . .

Stephen: (reluctantly) Well, OK. But I still think we'll get killed. Type it in, Lilian.
Andrew: (reading text) Immediately you draw your sword, the gremlins attack and you are so badly outnumbered that . . .
Voices: Oh no! We'll get killed!

I sat back and watched. The children were genuinely involved in the storyline, and I found it fascinating to observe how well the youngsters were able to organise themselves with no teacher direction whatsoever. Stephen emerged very quickly as group leader, taking control over who was going to read aloud, who should do the typing, and how disputes should be solved. All the children were being given useful opportunities to talk to each other and discuss the problems in the adventure, read the screen text, listen to each others' opinions, and take notes. They were also learning how to co-operate with each other in working towards a common goal, and I was impressed with their willingness to respect the fact that other people might disagree — rather than, as normally happens with children, just shout down any opposition!

When I eventually interrupted the group and sat down with the whole class for a chat, I asked the children what they had thought of the game. The vast majority declared that they had thoroughly enjoyed it, and that it was definitely worth buying. Interestingly enough, most thought that the absence of screen graphics wasn't a problem. As Samantha said, 'I thought it good that there weren't any graphics, because you could imagine the different places and people'.

They also liked Turtle's idea of offering an optional booklet of black and white illustrations as a separate purchase, and thought that younger children would have fun colouring it in. Graham felt that the game had a particularly good storyline and sense of atmosphere, so that it was easy to really imagine yourself as Jack. The humour in the adventure was especially appreciated by the class. I don't want to give too much away, but a favourite part of the action was the section set in Topsy Turvy Land, where everything is upside down!

What came over most as we talked was how involved in the game the children had become, and we went on to discuss the educational value of adventure programs such as *Jack in Crazyland*. The children themselves were immediately able to pinpoint the aspects they felt most useful.

Lynn: Typing in the commands helps you find your way around a keyboard.
Wendy: The game can improve your vocabulary. Sometimes the screen text give you words you don't understand, and you can look them up.
Lilian: I like Jack in Crazyland because you had to think very hard to solve some of the puzzles.

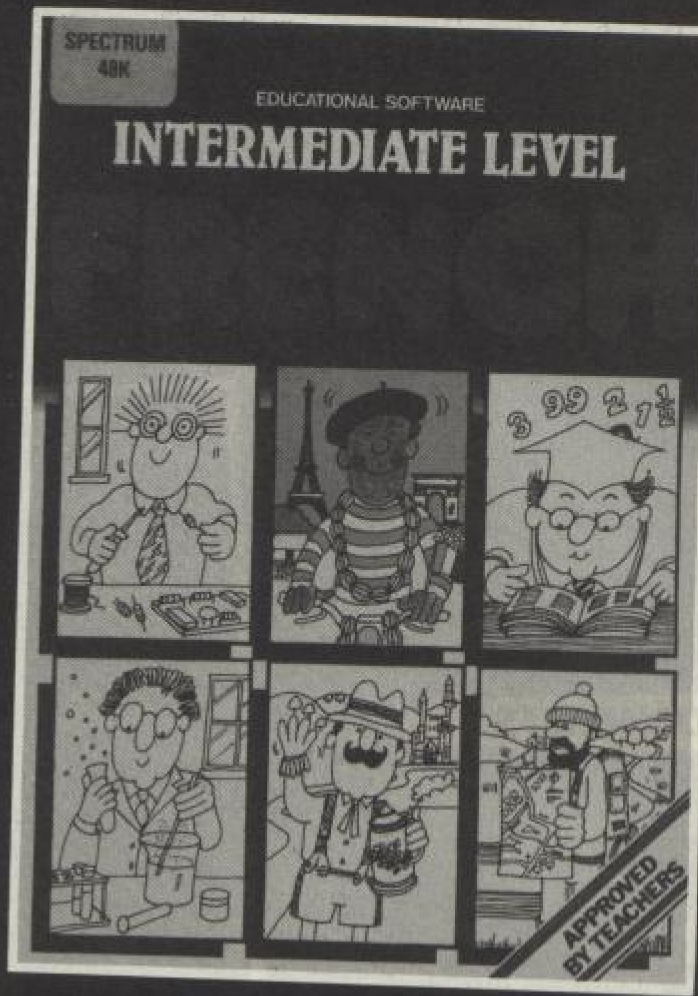
The children gave an interesting response when I asked them what sort of adventure programs they would like to see available in shops. George suggested Gullivers Travels, which would follow the storyline of the book, would be exciting, and would have lots of locations. One of the girls felt that Alice in Wonderland would also translate well into a computer adventure. Other children wanted to see adventures featuring favourite characters — the Famous Five and Secret Seven were particularly popular — but with new storylines. They especially liked the idea of working on such adventures in school rather than at home, as they preferred working in groups to working on their own, and thought that their teacher would be able to organise all sorts of related activities for them to work on.

Jack in Crazyland is ideal as a stimulus for all sorts of classwork — reading, vocabulary building, art and craft work, and so on, depending on the age and ability of the group of children involved. This is exactly the sort of program that children love and teachers want — with the option of sending for the illustrated booklet and teaching notes, including the play sequence for the game. So come on, distributors, let's see more games like this readily available in the high street stores.

COMMENTS

Control keys: commands entered as normal
Keyboard play: very good
Use of colour: limited
Graphics: a purely textual adventure, but you can send to Turtle for the illustrated booklet
General rating: Highly recommended. An interesting and amusing storyline which will keep children engrossed for hours. Suitable for use both in the home and in school.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL FRENCH



Producer: Scisoft
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Age range: **from beginners up to O Level**

Yet another of the foreign language study aids on the market, this package with its four programs — *Seaside*, *Home*, *Holiday* and *Cafe* — aims to give the learner practice in situations he or she is likely to encounter. The point is made in the accompanying booklet that these programs are not merely vocabulary tests, but that the exercises involved include deletions, where the child has to supply the missing word in a sentence; Sequencing, where the words have to be put into the correct order; and Alphabetic Ordering.

The menu for each program allows the user to select from three levels of difficulty or to choose to answer the picture questions, and the booklet gives advice to the parent or teacher about how the child should tackle the exercises. For the

deletion option, for instance, the advice is that once the child can successfully fill in the gaps, he or she should then write down the order of the sentences and make a translation of the complete story which can then be checked against the correct version displayed by the computer.

The problem of dealing with characters such as accents, circumflexes and cedillas is well overcome with the inclusion of an overlay, so that the user can select the graphics mode and type in French vowels with appropriate accents.

Although hardly innovative, this package does provide quite useful practice in the French language, though I wish more publishers would broaden their horizons in this field, and pay some attention to including an aural element in language packages. Having said that, however, Scisoft are reputable publishers of educational software, and unlike some programs on the educational market, all those in this series have been written and approved by teachers and thouroughly tested in schools.

COMMENTS

Control keys: the overlay allows the input of French accented vowels when the Graphics Mode is selected.
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: simple, but clear
Graphics: rather dull
General rating: plenty of options to choose from, but no better or worse than many other language study aids of this type.

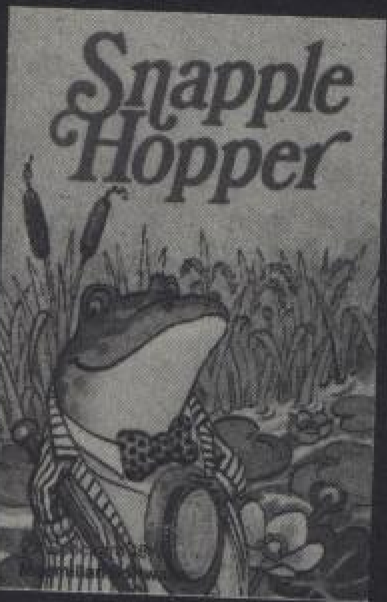
SNAPPLE HOPPER

Producer: Macmillan
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Author: **Betty Root/ Fisher-Marriott**
Age range: **4—8 years**

Another of the highly successful packages devised by Betty Root of the Centre for the Teaching of Reading as the University of Reading, *Snapple Hopper* consists of two games which teach initial sounds and rhyming words. In *Snapple*, which is based on the game Snap, you can choose from a one or two player game, and from nine levels of difficulty. Pairs of pictures are displayed on the screen, and if the two pictures shown start with the same two letters, the first player to press a response key wins a snap. Depending on the ability of the players, the pictures can be displayed with or without words.

In *Hopper*, which again can be played by one or two children choosing from nine speeds, the players must spot which of eight pictures has a name which rhymes with the name of the picture displayed in the centre of the screen. If the child makes an incorrect choice, or no choice at all, the rhyming word appears on the screen.

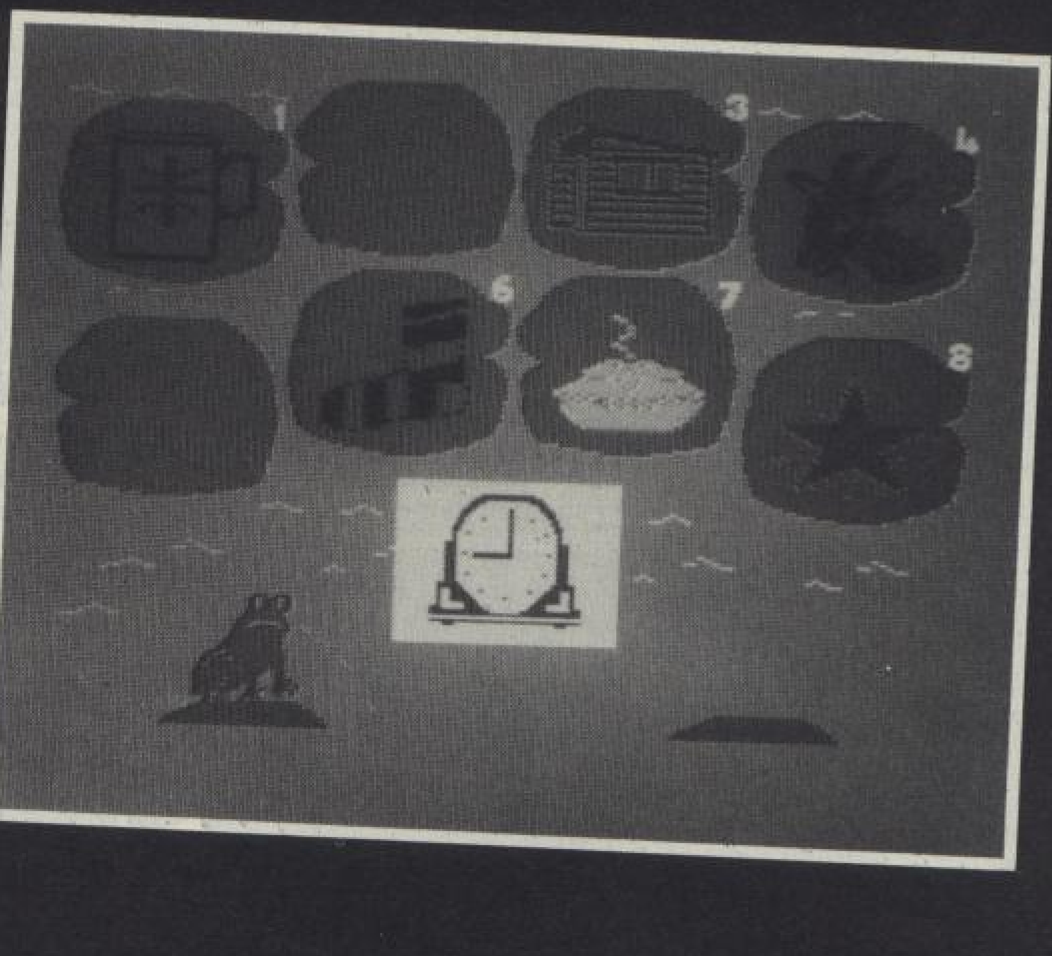
These two games are extremely simple in design, but will provide fun and useful reinforcement of word recognition skills for the young child.



COMMENTS

Control keys: In *Snapple*, one player uses ENTER, the other uses A
In *Hopper*, the player presses the appropriate number, from 1 to 8
Keyboard play: fast
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: excellent
General rating: Up to the usual high standard of Betty Root's programs.





TECH NICHE

THE ARTIST

Even after 3 Spectrum seasons graphic utilities are still sprouting up fast from the fertile software vegetable patch. Every home-grower is vying for the biggest and juiciest product and this cannot be easy with existing 'veg' such as Leonardo. *Softek have taken the challenge and have created 'the most powerful and flexible graphics program for the Spectrum' yet. Powerful words no doubt, but if this is true, SofTechnics, which is a division of Softek International Ltd, has given The Edge the edge over its competition in the creation of interesting graphics for its excellent games software. By releasing it to the general public, the powerful tool, which is aptly named* The Artist, *is going to provide anybody with the same firing, I beg your pardon, drawing power . . .*



After displaying the intriguing loading screen (Thank God the human hand has got the upper hand), which incidentally I was told was put to screen within a couple of hours with the help of — you guessed it — *The Artist*, the program displays a not very unfamiliar main 'work screen' with a row of command options at the bottom. In actual fact, there are 3 main command menus serially accessible by pressing the symbol shift key. Cursor movement is manual with the use of the Q and S keys for up/down and R and T keys for left/right movement and their combinations for any diagonal movement. A joystick may be used with the addition of a Kempston interface. The speed of the cursor movement is governed by the length of time the keys are held down. This facilitates fine detail work, with the initial slow speed, and obviates the need to pre-select speeds. The major pen/brush controls are C for setting pixels, X for deleting them and Z for setting the attributes.

The main menu features such interesting options as Brush, Brush pattern, Text, View, Move, Cls, Storage and Chr and these can be explored in turn . . .

Brush selects the brush in action, which can vary in thickness from 1 to 8, can be a quill providing variable brush width or can be an airbrush, which in combination with the eight airbrush widths can be used to spray the screen for shading and blending.

Brush pattern selects one of the ten patterns available with which the screen may be painted. Here again, the brush size may be varied for best results. The cursor changes size and shape to indicate the current choice.

Text is the typewriter mode which provides a text-writing related menu on selection. This includes options such as inverted or normal and 'Over' text together with the more mundane functions Capslock and Extended. An interesting feature is the selection of the inbuilt small character set, which provides at the touch of a button a 64 column text display. There is also the choice of selecting up to 8 different character sets, which can be defined using the inbuilt Character Graphics Generator. These can be viewed in text mode for easy recognition.

View eliminates the function menu at the bottom of the screen and gives a full view of the entire screen area for full screen designs. Pressing any other key will bring back the main menu.

Move is an alternative to the View function in that it displays the lower three menu-hidden lines by scrolling the entire screen up three lines. This allows work to be done on the lower lines, which are normally hidden by the menu.

CLS clears the screen, but only after confirmation has been given — thus reducing the risk of any artistic suicide attempts.

Storage deals with the saving and loading of data and pictures and to this purpose a new menu appears. Here will be found the Copy function, which copies the current screen to the ZX-printer. Save and load functions are provided for tape, wafadrive and microdrive systems with the option of storing or retrieving character sets, screens and user graphics. To control the wafadrive/microdrive operation, there is a CAT (Catalogue) and an Erase facility and for the wafadrive specifically a Flip Default Drive, which switches between A and B drives.

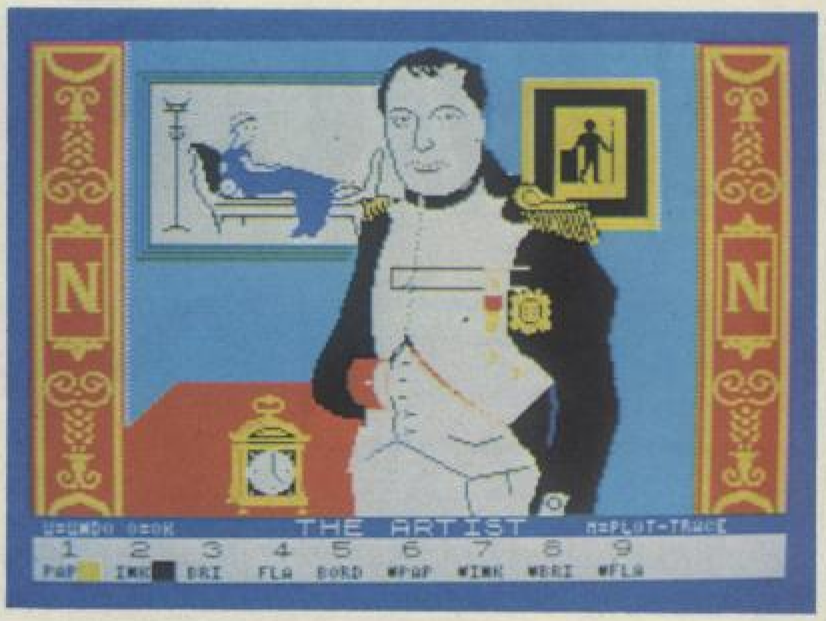
The second 'Main Menu' deals with the graphics generation and includes several innovative features.

Line deals with line drawing, and three different techniques may be used which all require a main cursor and a reference cursor. Plot-Point mode retains a fixed reference cursor and when the main cursor is moved, all lines will originate from this fixed point. Plot-Move slaves the reference cursor to the main cursor and if the main cursor is moved, the reference cursor will move in parallel. The lines drawn will therefore always be in parallel. The most commonly used mode will be the Plot-Trace mode, which automatically repositions the reference cursor to the last main cursor position when a Line command is executed. This mode is used for outline drawings. The reference cursor can be repositioned at all times by setting the main cursor to the required position and pressing Space.

Circle is a straightforward circle generator. The reference cursor is used to set the circle's centre and the main cursor defines the radius by indicating a point on the circumference. This is a far more useful method than the normal Spectrum circle function, where the radius must be given as a parameter.

Box draws boxes or frames





indicated by the diagonal position of the two cursors.

Arc draws arcs provisionally between the two cursor positions, and six keys with progressive action may be used to curve the arc in both directions. When the right curvature is achieved, the arc may be accepted by pressing the P key.

Fill is an extremely fast fill function with the added advantage of filling not only in black but in any pattern, which can either be one of the 10 inbuilt patterns or any selfcreated pattern. These can be selected in the pattern choice mode.

Over and **Invert** affect the four drawing commands and are self-explanatory.

Pattern provides a chequer pattern of bright and normal character squares for determining where the attribute boundaries are.

Enlarge blows up the area of the screen currently being worked on and indicated by the main cursor. All draw commands are available in this mode and the display area moves automatically across the entire screen area.

Undo lastly provides help should anything have gone wrong during the events of the creation. U undoes a command and O will protect all commands up to this point from being undone. O for Okay actually acts as a pointer to the Artist as to how far back the Undo command should be effective. The Undo command is extremely effective as it can undo one command after another, in fact a whole string of commands up to the last okayed entry. This provides an easy experimenting facility with different shading, colouring, shapes etc. Automatic okays occur whenever a fill is done, or after entering the text mode and when leaving the Overlay mode. Undo can also undo itself, so if the work has accidentally been undone, it can be retrieved with an Undo command.

Overlay provides the most ingenious feature to the screen artist. This mode allows any area of the existing screen picture to be lifted, transformed with the use of various functions, moved and refitted into the screen picture in different ways. The execution is straightforward. After selecting the Overlay mode, the boundaries of the picture segment to be lifted can be drawn with the use of the Plot-Trace mode. Ensuring that the main cursor is positioned within this closed shape, the 0 key will fill in the shape with black. By pressing the overlay key (3) again, the overlapping section will be cut out and lifted out of the screen. At this stage there is the choice of removing the picture, ie. cutting it out, or of only making a transportable copy of it without destroying the original area. The transportable copy may now be manipulated with various functions such as Invert, Mirroring (left/right or up/down) or scaling (up or down in ten different increments). When positioning the copy, it can be viewed in its new place provisionally before committing to the screen and the chequer pattern may be energised for the correct positioning in relation to attribute boundaries. Dropping the copy into the screen can be done using XOR (blending), Or (superimposing) or EXCLUSIV (destroying the existing picture information) logic. Several copies of the shape may be dropped onto the screen.

The possibilities are enormous with the Overlay mode, and several functions found in other graphic packages can be reproduced quite easily. Elipses for example can quite easily be drawn in overlay mode with the use of the scaling option. Shading of existing drawings can be accomplished with the overlay method. In fact the user's imagination will probably set the limit to the applications.

The last main menu deals with the colouring of drawings and provides access to the colour, brightness and flash attributes of the screen. Colouring technique is equivalent to the Spectrum Basic options. Entering the menu however will immediately display a window with the two cursors defining the size and position. The colour changes will be confined to the window area. Paper, Ink, Bright and Flash can be selected and executed within this frame. The border colour can also be chosen, but as it is not part of the screen will have to be set later in the user's program.

Going back to the first main menu, the selection of CHR leads into the Character and User Defined Graphics Creation sector. Up to seven character sets may be redefined. The screen displays a grid of nine large character squares and each of these is split up into 64 bit squares. On the left of the screen is displayed the menu function and above it the original sized block of nine characters that can be worked on (the USR square). Above this there are a further 4 such squares alternately coloured green and cyan. Creating and storing characters is quite easy. After having drawn the new characters on the enlarged grid using the available drawing functions, the character set mode is selected. The selected set number is displayed in the top left corner and the USR box with the new characters remains on display. The characters in the selected set are displayed and arranged in columns and rows numbered for easy reference.

The different sets may be selected by pressing the 'C' key and entering the set number. Saving is accomplished by pressing key 'S' and entering start line and start column with a further indication of the quantity of characters to be stored. Loading is performed similarily. Set 0 is the original Spectrum character set and although no new characters may be saved in it, the existing characters may be loaded into the USR block. The program even allows characters to be grabbed from the main screen into the USR block by pressing key 'K'. A green 9 character square will appear and this can be moved around over the area of interest and grabbed with key 'X'. This feature allows the creation of characters larger than 3 x 3 with the help of the enlarge feature on the main screen. Once stored (in groups of 9 character squares) they may be recalled onto the main screen.

The creation of the new USR characters is accomplished using the same keys for cursor movement and pixel setting as with the main screen. An addition is the 'Z' key which will clear entire rows within a given character cell. Three mirror options are provided (mirroring single character cell, mirroring the leftmost six characters and mirroring all 9 characters), similarily three Turn facilities are provided, which will turn each character (or block of four or block of nine) around its axis by 90 degrees, and an Invert command.

Apart from the usual CLS (Clear grid) and Undo command, there is a powerful move option, which moves the entire contents of the grid, pixel by pixel, in any direction. The four coloured 9 character blocks provide a facility to store and animate related sprite graphics. Print and Load Block provides the transfer between the USR block and these four. Animate Four will animate the sprite by printing in rapid succession the four blocks in the USR square. There is even the possibility of animating six successive characters with Animate Six using the entire character set.

SofTechnics provide a Screen Compressor with the package which can be loaded separately from side 2 of the tape. The program allows several screens to be stored or thirds or two-thirds of screens, giving each a number and then allowing pictures to be recalled upon selection of their number. The program has a menu which provides the choice of loading a screen, viewing it, deleting the last screen or saving the finished block of screens. The compressed block of graphics can be loaded into the required mem-

□MACHINE CODE WITHOUT TEARS PART II

□NEW BASIC COMPILERS

Last month we looked at five well-established Spectrum compilers — programs to translate ZX BASIC into fast machine code. We left you excitedly waiting for the results of our tests on two new compilers Colt **and** BLAST. **At the last moment, we received a copy of** Mcoder 3, **another BASIC compiler scheduled for imminent launch. Do the new programs knock spots off the golden oldies? Read on to find out. . . .**

THE COLT

£12.95 from HiSoft
180 High Street North,
Dunstable, Beds LU6 1AT

The Colt is a new BASIC compiler from **HiSoft**, previously well-known for their Spectrum Pascal package. *Colt* is a fourth generation program, descended from *ZX-GT*, *Mcoder 1*, and *Mcoder 2*, reviewed last issue. Rather confusingly, *Mcoder 3* (which we look at later) is an entirely new program.

Colt is more than just a BASIC compiler — the package also contains *The Executive*, which contains a number of useful extensions to BASIC, some of them quite unusual and others rather dull. You get a digital clock accurate to a tenth of a second (!), which you have to set using just two keys, like a tatty radio alarm. You can control the clock like a stopwatch, but it stops whenever you use cassettes or microdrives!

You get single-key commands, some of them programmable, but these use the Space key as an extra Shift. This interferes with key 'roll-over', so you have to be careful when typing text, or Space characters get lost. Command entry takes a lot of getting used to — you must press Space, then another key, then release Space, then release the other key. If we hadn't got used to Spectrum single-key entry, we'd say it was almost unusable. . . .

The Executive offers a full set of QL-style windowing commands and a sprite handler which can cope with up to 16 large sprites (32 by 24 pixels). These facilities allow smooth movement and scrolling, with automatic collision detection. Keen programmers may value commands for error-trapping, logging the parts of a program which take the most time, deleting groups of lines and base conversions — in the unlikely event that they haven't already got programs to do such things.

THE COMPILER

Colt itself occupies about 6K of memory, and *The Executive* requires another 7K. You can use the compiler on its own if you wish. Even this may not leave enough space to compile large programs, since *Colt* normally keeps the original 'source' and the compiled code together in memory. You can compile up to about 16K this way; otherwise you must tell *Colt* to overwrite the original program as it compiles it, allowing up to 32K to be compiled, but forcing you to save and load your program every time a change is needed.

Colt works blindingly fast, churning out code at a rate of about 1K a second! This makes it noticeably faster than *Mcoder 2* and the *Softek* compilers, and MUCH faster than all the others. If an error is found the line is listed with a flashing question mark, and the cursor is set so that the line pops up as soon as you press EDIT. In view of the speed of compilation, it hardly matters that *Colt* only finds one error at a time!

Unlike the other compilers reviewed this month, *Colt* is an integer-only compiler, which means that arithmetic is done using whole numbers, trading accuracy for speed. If you are writing a new game the lack of floating point arithmetic should not cause many problems, but it does make it very unlikely that you will be able to compile existing BASIC programs without major changes.

Colt recognises the vast majority of ZX BASIC commands, although user-defined functions and arrays of more than one dimension are prohibited. Calculations are not allowed in DATA statements, and there are minor limitations on the use of AND, OR, LEN, CLEAR, RND and FOR.

The benchmark timings show that *Colt* produces much faster code than *BLAST* or *Mcoder 3*. Programs compiled with *Colt* run at roughly the same speed as those processed by *Mcoder 2* or Softek's *IS* compiler; only *ZIP* produces substantially faster code.

You can use commands from the *Executive* in compiled programs — window and sprite-handling is likely to be especially useful. *Colt* is the only fast compiler which recognises microdrive commands, and HiSoft claim that it can even cope with floppy disks and wafer drives so long as they use the Sinclair keywords. Of course, the compiler doesn't actually



speed-up these operations — it just calls the ROM like normal BASIC.

FLOATING POINT (ALMOST)

There is a 'trick' way of doing floating-point arithmetic in programs compiled using *Colt*. If the VAL, VAL$ or STR$ functions appear in a compiled program, the interpreter is used to work out the result, so decimal maths can be used inside the string being processed. You can put:

LET NUM=VAL(COS"(2)*255")

in a compiled program; the calculation is performed using full floating-point maths (at the speed of normal ZX BASIC) and then NUM is set to the whole number part of the result. If you use:

LET ST$=STR$ VAL("7/2")

the string ST$ is set to '3.5', the correct floating point result, although there's not much you can do with it except PRINT it or use it in another VAL expression.

This would be a powerful feature but for the fact that any variable-names in VAL strings refer to BASIC variables, rather than to the variables in the compiled program. It is a useful way of passing values from BASIC to machine code, but it is often just a source of irritation, as there is no way a compiled program can set BASIC variables. You can read *Colt* variables from BASIC, but that's not quite the same thing. . . .

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ory area and recalled with a short Basic program. The compression technique is based on a complex pattern search and detect system and the effectiveness depends on the complexity of the given screen. Typically, it will compress a screen to between a third and a half of its normal size. The compression of screen-thirds provides the possibility of writing simple but effective graphic adventures in Basic.

The Artist proves to be a very effective graphics package, which excells in the simple user interface and in the completeness of all its functions. The overlay scheme replaces a million and one special functions and only extensive use will display its full potential. Best-liked features are the extended brush and pattern functions, the overlay technique, the practical circle function and the extremely fast fill routine. Added to that there is the versatile character generator with inbuilt sprite animator and the very useful screen compressor. The manual is both comprehensive and informative, and if anything seems to be omitted following the main program on side 1 there are several screen samples on the tape which should serve as an indication as to what can be achieved with *The Artist*. Finally, SofTechnics offer a service of producing colour printer dumps from an inkjet printer for the benefit of colour-printerless Artist users.

Program: **The Artist**
Producer: **SofTechnics — Softek**
Price: **£12.95**

DOCUMENTATION

We looked at the pre-release version of the compiler, so the documentation was not in its final form. What we received was plentiful and interesting, although much of it might be heavy going for someone unfamiliar with the intricacies of machine code and the Spectrum ROM.

The *Colt* package is good value at £12.95, but it is not very easy to use — it is rather idiosyncratic, like all the integer compilers, and various tricks and POKEs are needed to get the best from it. *Colt* is recommended to hardened hackers, especially if the *Executive* facilities fill a gap in their present armoury.

BLAST

£24.95 from Oxford Computer Systems (Software) Hensington Road, Woodstock, Oxford, OX7 1JR

BLAST is the compiler that everyone has been waiting for, since the first advertisements appeared back in May. Billed as 'the first fully compatible optimising BASIC compiler', capable of compiling 'ANY BASIC PROGRAM, without alteration' into 'super efficient code capable of running at up to forty times the speed of BASIC'. Other advertised goodies included 'many extensions', 'genuine integer variables', 'debugging facilities', and 'a comprehensive toolkit'.

With a billing like that, we couldn't wait to get our hands on 'the complete BASIC programmer's package'. Sadly, the reality was rather different from the hype.

BLAST is supplied in a large plastic box, about the size of two Betamax video cassettes. Inside the box is a 30 page typeset handbook, of roughly A5 size. Three sides of corrections, on separate sheets, convey the first disappointment — the 'MANY EXTENSIONS' touted on the lid, have not been implemented 'due to lack of memory'. As compensation, some extra features have been added to the toolkit.

The manual's content — once you've made the corrections and crossed out the pages which are now irrelevant — is quite interesting. Unfortunately there are no examples and the organisation is poor; the manual skips back and forth between subjects and contains several irritating forward references. The spelling and grammar are erratic.

The box also contains a 'protection' grid, which you are asked to refer to whenever the compiler is loaded — it contains about a thousand coloured dots. You have to identify four of them to prove that you have good eyesight and a legitimate copy of *BLAST* If you make a mistake, the program crashes and you have to reload all 48K from scratch.

CHEAP TOOLS

The other side of the tape contains the *BLAST* toolkit, which offers all the usual facilities — trace, search, copy, renumber, delete, list variables and so on. As with *Colt*, many BASIC programmers will already own such utilities.

There were signs that the toolkit had been thrown together in rather a rush — it was possible to crash the machine by careless use of Search and Replace, for instance. The special *'BLAST save'* option, which writes files in small sections so that they can be read piecemeal by the compiler, does not check its parameters until after it has printed the START TAPE prompt, giving a jumbled display. There is no wait for a key press before saving begins.

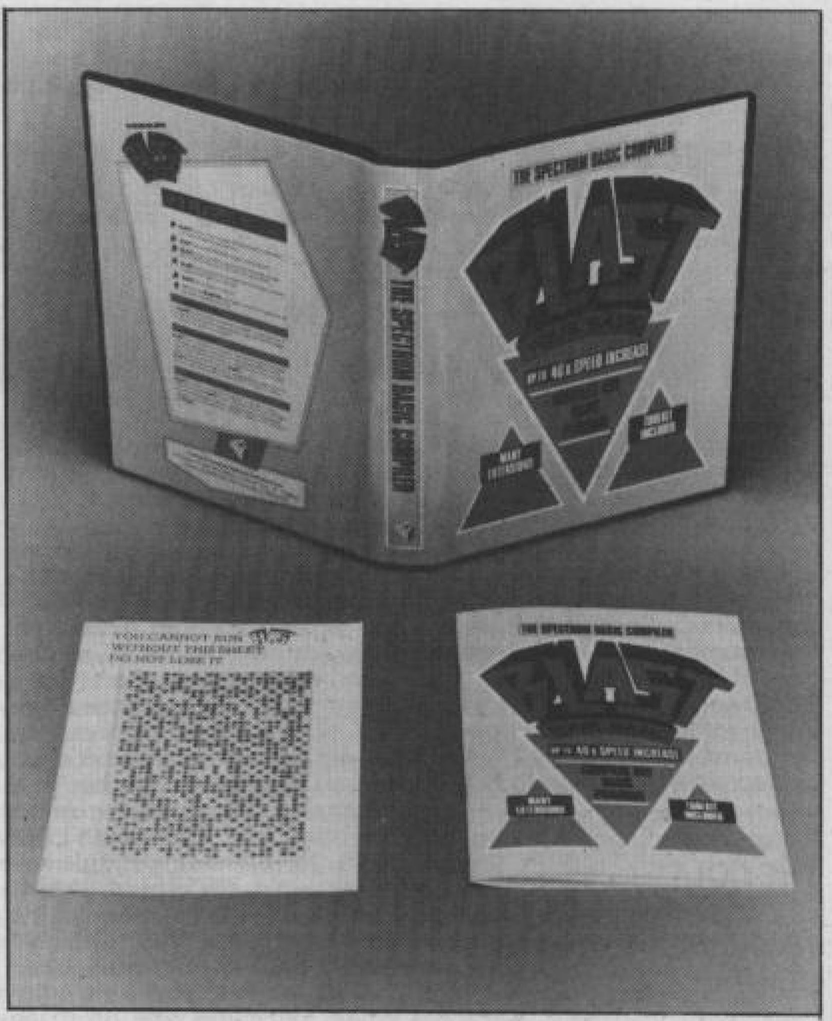
The *BLAST* renumber command can't cope with more than 643 lines, unlike other toolkits. Most annoying is the fact that search and replace does not cope with the 'hidden numbers' in all Spectrum programs. ZX BASIC keeps the binary form of numbers stored after the text, though you can't see it when you type LIST. *BLAST* can't see it either, so an attempt to replace one number with another changes the text but not the value — you see the new value when you type LIST, and the old one when you run your program!

BLAST OFF

BLAST generates two types of code — machine code, which is fast but verbose, and p-code — symbolic code which is concise but runs more slowly. There is just 2½K free once the compiler has been loaded, so you can only compile tiny programs without recourse to tape or microdrive. The toolkit is 5K long (the manual says 2K), so you can't load it at the same time as the compiler.

We tested *BLAST* with the eight standard benchmark programs. The machine code timings obtained are shown in the benchmark table. *BLAST* code is slightly faster than that from Softek's *FP* compiler, substantially slower than that from *Mcoder 3*, the other 'full' compiler, and much slower than the integer-only compilers. These results were a little surprising — an 'optimising' compiler ought to be able to make mincemeat out of the benchmarks.

We tried using the p-code instead of machine code, and found that the results were up to twenty percent slower than when machine code output was selected. The big shock came when we specified that some variables were to be treated as integers — it made no difference at all!



The PR Picture that comes with BLAST. The suggested caption states that BLAST is the new basic compiler for any Sinclair Machine. (!)
It doesn't work too well on the Spectrum — and is a total non runner on Sinclair's ZX80, ZX81 and QL machines!
The picture doesn't reveal the 3 sides of corrections, apologies and errata that come with the package OR the large number of other corrections which are needed before the manual becomes an accurate description of the program.

Without this option, it is hard to believe that the promised speed up of 40 times could be achieved in real programs. An Oxford employee admitted on the 'phone that the optimisations advertised and documented in the manual were missing. We were promised a succession of upgrades, but none arrived after several weeks and repeated requests.

3BLAST's user-interface is good, with no need of the RAND USR calls of the compilers reviewed last month. To compile a program you type one two-character command; to run it you type another. As programs are compiled, the screen memory is used as a temporary storage area, producing a riot of flashing dots and cascading colours, which helped to pass the time during compilations, which took place at a rate of a couple of lines per second.

As a simple test of *BLAST*'s error-detection, we gave it a program containing a spurious NEXT statement. The error was not detected as the program was compiled; when we ran the code the value sixty million million was mysteriously printed and an 'out of memory' error occurred, with no indication of the type or location of the error. To be fair, we tried the same incorrect program on the other compilers. They coped rather better, either skipping the extra NEXT or rejecting it with a 'NEXT without FOR' message.

We then limbered up our microdrive, and prepared to compile some real programs. Our first attempt came to an end after about a minute and a half, when *BLAST* spat out the message 'VARS TOO LONG' and crashed as soon as a command was entered. We 'phoned Oxford to ask what this meant, but they wouldn't say. Another upgraded copy of the compiler was promised, but, a fortnight later, it hasn't turned up.

We tried the same thing again, and found a rather silly bug — *BLAST* crashes if the file which it is asked to write already exists. After re-loading, looking up the colours and so on, we checked that the compiler acted sensibly if the input file was missing. It didn't — it crashed, again.

We tried another published BASIC game, which *Mcoder 3* had compiled successfully. After 852 seconds (they said *BLAST* worked in 'seconds') the com-

piler stopped, complaining 'SYSTEM ERROR 1'.

It was a relief to find a simple program (*Spectrum Autosonics*, published by Buttercraft way back in 1982) that *BLAST* was able to compile. Or at least, *BLAST* chugged all the way through the code and produced an output file. When we tried to run it, following the instructions to the letter, guess what?

The machine crashed.

We couldn't find a single, non-trivial program that *BLAST* would compile.

In case you haven't already got the drift, the performance of *BLAST* is pretty shocking; we wonder what those who have already paid £24.95 for a copy must think. The program seems to have been launched almost totally untested — the documentation and the advertising bear little relation to the product.

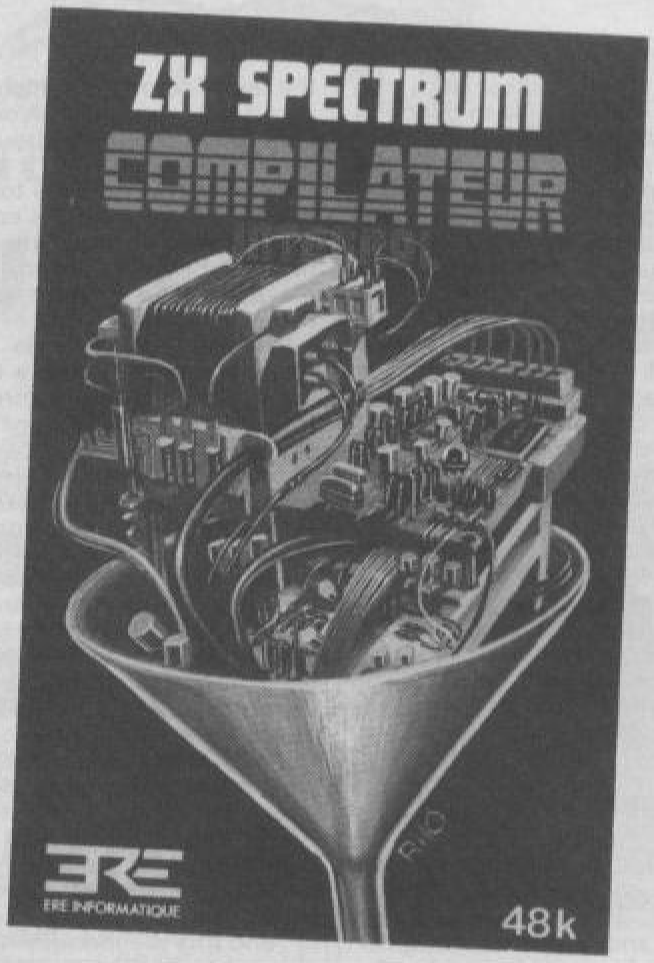
Not so much a *BLAST*, more of a Phut.

MCODER 3
£12.95 from PSS
452 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry, CV6 5DG

Mcoder 3 arrived shortly before this review was finished. It was first published in France last year, by an outfit called Ere Infomatique. Now PSS have bought UK rights and renamed it *Mcoder 3*, though it has nothing in common with earlier *Mcoders*. It is an interesting program, which operates quite differently from the others on the UK market.

We looked at a French copy of the compiler, with documentation to match — 'Vous venez de transformer un program BASIC en language machine', it chirps in fluent Franglais. The cassette cover features a wonderful picture of a circuit assembly being sucked through a funnel — I hope PSS use this on the UK version. They are working on an expanded English manual, but in fact *Mcoder 3* doesn't need much documentation, since it compiles just about all of ZX BASIC, with very few idiosyncracies.

Mcoder 3 is a full floating-point compiler, to be compared with *BLAST* and Softek's (rather more restricting) *FP* program. The compilation process is more long-winded than Softek's, as the compiler must be loaded — in two sections — every time a compilation is required. No instructions are provided on how to make a working copy,



The Frenchipoos cover pour le compilateur magnifique que s'applerai MCODER 3 quand il arrive en Angleterre. Pas mal product, comme ils disent dans CRASH Towers. Hola!



which is a mistake since the master tape is likely to get quite a thrashing; there is a spare copy on the other side of the cassette.

You can compile programs of up to about 25K with *Mcoder 3.* The snags are that you can't compile from microdrive or tape (there is no support for Interface 1 commands) and you lose your original program as it is compiled.

The only restrictions from standard ZX BASIC are that arrays must have constant dimensions (rather than dimensions worked out by the program) and they can only be dimensioned once. MERGE and LIST are not allowed in compiled programs, since there's no program text after compilation, and RUN and CLEAR reset variables to null or zero rather than forget them completely.

USING MCODER 3

Before using *Mcoder 3* you should load your BASIC as normal. Then type LOAD "" CODE and play the compiler cassette for about forty seconds. This loads the first part of the compiler, which checks for errors (reporting only one at a time, but leaving your BASIC in memory), deletes comments and generally tidies up before the real work begins. One nice feature is that REMs at the start of a program are retained, in case they contain machine code. Likewise DATA and DEF FN statements are kept in their original form, though they can be called from compiled programs.

A succession of messages flash up as the tidying process takes place — then the compiler prints PLAY and you can load the rest of *Mcoder 3*, which takes about 20 seconds. *Mcoder 3* generates code at about the same rate as *BLAST*; it took a total of twelve minutes to compile a 16K program. As compilation takes place, the line number being analysed is displayed at the bottom of the screen.

When compilation is complete, you are left with a listing containing initial comments, DATA, function definitions and a single REM concealing the compiled code. You can start the program from any line with GO TO (so long as you have the original listing to hand); Break is allowed (unlike Softek's *FP* compiler) and error messages even contain BASIC line numbers. You can print and alter variables used in compiled programs in the normal way, but CONTINUE doesn't work (you have to use GO TO). RUN, DIM and CLEAR may corrupt the code if used after compilation.

The benchmark timings show that *Mcoder 3* produces quite fast code — it gives substantially better results than *BLAST* and *FP*, and this is especially noticeable when 'real' programs are compiled.

The bad news is that *Mcoder 3* seems to have a few bugs:

INK RND*5

gave an error when run in compiled form, presumably because the compiler does not automatically round results to a whole number, as normal BASIC does. This snag was not hard to get around — we just added an INT statement in the line which *Mcoder 3* indicated to be the source of the problem — but it is an incompatibility which should not be present.

We also had problems with strings getting corrupted as one compiled game ran. We discussed this by telephone with the publishers in France, but were were unable to work out a fix, or even diagnose the cause. Other string-handling programs worked fine.

Despite these flaws, *Mcoder 3* is the only compiler we have looked at that has been able to compile 'off the shelf' programs with a reasonable degree of success. Softek's *FP* compiler restricts the use of GO TO, GO SUB, arrays, functions and logical operators (AND and OR), and this meant that it would only cope with very straight-forward programs. *BLAST* was a waste of time.

CONCLUSIONS

It is surprising how well the old compilers have stood the test of time — perhaps this is because software houses underestimate the task of testing a compiler properly. *ZIP* still produces the fastest code at the lowest price, though it works slowly and lacks strings. Softek's *IS*, and *Mcoder 2* are still good value, although *Colt* provides a lot of extra features for three pounds more. Softek say that they will enhance *FP* to remove some of the restrictions (already VAL and VAL$ are allowed), but they'll have their work cut out to catch up with *Mcoder 3. BLAST* can only be recommended to masochists.

Serious games writers might do best by using a mixture of two compilers — one to handle the majority of the code, with a few restrictions, and an integer compiler to process high-speed sections. A discounted package offering *IS* and *FP* is in the offing, though users should bear in mind that *Mcoder 2, IS, FP*, and *Colt* are mutually incompatible since they all use the same memory to store run-time routines.

It is certainly possible to write hit games with a BASIC compiler — Virgin's *Sorcery* and PSS's *Frank 'N Stein* prove that — but there are still times when only machine code can deliver the goods. If you're a hardened hacker, this may come as some relief!

● The review of BLAST printed here used version 2.0 of the program, borrowed from CRASH Mail order. As we went to press, a review copy of BLAST version 3.0 arrived — and we had a quick look. . . . The bugs that made the compiler we reviewed incapable of coping with non-trivial programs have been fixed, it seems. Some of the benchmark timings have improved, but BLAST 3.0 still produces consistently slower code than Mcoder 3.

It appears that the integer option still has no effect, and indeed there are no signs that the other advertised optimisations are taking place. We would warn potential purchasers of BLAST to make sure that the versions they buy are at least 3.0 or above.

With Version 3.0 there's only 2K free for compiling in memory. We still can't recommend BLAST to anyone without microdrives: as the manual says, 'if you have large programs to compile and no microdrive we strongly advise that you get one . . .'.

If you have already purchased an early copy of BLAST, Oxford Computer Systems will happily exchange your copy for version 3.0, their PR company tells us.

BENCHMARK TESTS - Comparing the compilers

Eight standard BenchMark programs were used in the comparison: timings for the execution of each benchmark program are given in seconds, with the speedup ratios achieved by each of the compilers printed on a grey background.

	BM1	BM2	BM3	BM4	BM5	BM6	BM7	BM8
ZX BASIC	4.9	9.0	21.9	20.7	25.2	68.2	86.7	25.1
	6.3x	4.7x	2.7x	2.1x	2.5x	4.3x	4.4x	1.07x
BLAST	0.78	1.93	8.2	9.7	9.9	15.8	19.6	23.5
	94x	83x	37x	23x	27x	52x	50x	0x
COLT	0.052	0.108	0.60	0.89	0.92	1.30	1.72	—
	42x	10.7x	3.3x	3.1x	3.7x	7.7x	8.8x	1.13x
MCODER 3	0.118	0.84	6.7	6.7	6.8	8.9	9.9	22.2





DEREK BREWSTER'S

Adventure Trail

ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

NO, I'M WAITING FOR TAXI

If you were to sit down and try and write a TV comedy show you would no doubt find it difficult. To make the task a little easier you would be wise to consider who the main characters in the comedy were, how they were likely to behave in any given situation, and what relationship they had to each other. Watch any TV comedy program (*Taxi*, say) and see this writing skill in action. If the characters are too wooden, or the characters behave too often in an uncharacteristic manner, the comedy will fail.

In adventuring the same rules apply. *The Hobbit* attempted to bring some different characters into its plot, but too often Thorin can only sing about gold and Gandalf is generally found making a nuisance of himself closing doors and taking useful items from you. This is largely due to *The Hobbit* concerning itself more with complex vocabulary and graphics, leaving a small amount of memory for real characterization. *Sherlock*, on the other hand, devoted itself more fully to meaningful characters but I couldn't help thinking the complex vocabulary was not so much a help than a hindrance. A standardised vocabulary would have removed the need for substantial amounts of memory to be devoted to word analysis and would have smoothed considerably the player's introduction to the intricacies of the game. Playing word games should only be a small part of adventuring.

So where might characterization in adventuring lead? Clearly, some method of supplying additional memory to the Spectrum is needed. Once this problem is solved, the adventure author must carefully consider each character before the main code is written. What are the character's temperament, skills (eg archery, climbing, lock-picking) and allegiances? This should remove most of the discrepancies which creep into games attempting complex character development. What will result from good planning are believable, intelligent characters — the sort woefully absent from the likes of *Are You Being Served?*

A CRASH Smash

RED MOON

Producer: Level 9
Retail price: £6.95
Language: machine code
Authors: David Williamson & Pete Austin

After an *Emerald Isle* comes a *Red Moon* and I've spent about a week kicking my heels, or to be more precise, a red balloon around the house waiting for Level 9's latest masterpiece of competent, commercial programming to drop through my letter box. (The red balloon, with *Red Moon* written on it, was a piece of slick promotion from the canny Austin team which arrived some time before the actual game). And the verdict? — I can keep a balloon aloft for several minutes without tiring — longer if I first fill it with helium. Oh!! It's the game you want to know about? — oh, well, that's very absorbing too!

Let's try that one again — and the verdict? — well, it's another humdinger and a dead ringer for popular acclaim. The type-ahead is marvellous having been refined to enable you to go way ahead of the program without hardly looking up. The speed of the whole thing seems much more up-tempo than *Emerald Isle* — you can really whizz through this one. Combat is an essential element with weapons and armoury affording protection but the major new theme is one of magic, or Magik as it is called in this game, with numerous spells to add that little bit of spice. Indeed, Level 9 call *Red Moon* their first magical adventure.

With this game Level 9 have laid all that science future stuff to one side and produced a more fantasy/mythical monsters sort of environment. The story too, is mainstream fantasy adventureland.



An old storyteller addresses a crowd in a marketplace. She tells a tale of how once their moon was not dim but glowed with a cold crimson light. After many battles with the sun, the moon became pale and ashen and its light had little power. The all important Magik faded with the moon. Mythical beasts, which once ventured abroad by day, were restricted to the night, and more recently, to the full moon. Something had to be done to stop Magik failing altogether. And so it was that the Red Moon Crystal was made as a new source of Magik. While too weak to illuminate the world it did illuminate the kingdom from its position in the Moon Tower in Baskalos. Sadly, the moon crystal was stolen and Baskalos almost degenerated into barbarism. The story of how one brave magician recovered the crystal and saved the country is the story enacted by the player in this game.

Loading up *Red Moon* the presentation is up to the same high standard of *Emerald Isle*, though the scrolling text with no gaps or colour changes to distinguish between prompts, input and descriptions looks just a little cluttered. However, this is a small niggle for such a well turned out game. As I've said, the type-ahead, allowing input while the picture forms, or for that matter, while the program works on anything, is super — not only entertaining but surprisingly useful. The need to type in only the first three letters of a verb or noun ensures this speed never flags.

The structure of the plot constantly places you in the rather familiar bind of having to drop something in order to pick up something; you could almost say in the time honoured fash-





ion. As ever, deciding which object to drop is far from easy and often entails retracing steps. However, the game makes amends by politely offering many lives before the player has to resort to starting a new game — a super friendly gesture to the battle-weary adventurer.

As you might expect in a Level 9 game the location descriptions are long, detailed and superbly crafted. Take this one which appears early on: 'You are on a grassy mound which rises a few metres above a sea of waving grass. The plain seems to go on forever, broken only by three landmarks: a small, steeply pointed volcanic mountain to the north; a thin, marble tower to the southwest; and a wide forest to the east. Red flowers cover the mound, perfuming the air with a smell of magic. Exits are north to a volcanic outcrop, east to a wide, flat grassy plain, south to a ruined stone house and west to a wide flat grassy plain.' The ruined stone house mentioned here seems an ideal place to cache your loot.

Combat and Magik are themes which run throughout the game. Combat involves you pitting your strength represented by hit points against your assailant's, whether rat, guardian or cloaked statue or whether aided or abetted by armoury such as swords, daggers and magical cloaks. The combat routines are somewhat imposed upon the game to the extent that a fallen combatant cannot be examined or play any further part in the game (excluding, that is, the ghost of the rat which comes back to fight again). Having slain the rat EXAM RAT gives 'You can't see an enormous rat!'. Now that I've mentioned the examine command it should be noted that in this respect this game is somewhat atypical compared to other Level 9 games. Examine only seems to work when barking up the right tree — otherwise the range of responses is well down on the norm, although a few funny replies survive nonetheless.

The Magik is an integral part of *Red Moon*. To cast a spell the format CAST 'spell name' 'optional target' is used, eg CAST ESCAPE or CAST SCOOP NORTH. To cast a spell you must possess the focus for it and the objects needed are scattered liberally throughout the adventure. For example, to cast ESCAPE you need the dulcimer, a percussion instrument struck with a pair of hammers or a goose quill, while the SNOOP spell, which allows you to look into a nearby room, requires a pearl.

Red Moon is a highly competent adventure program which neatly walks the tightrope between absorbing plot and commercial, memory-guzzling colourful graphics. It displays many features to ensure this game keeps Level 9 at the top — the superb type-ahead, friendly input, imaginative graphics and long, descriptive prose. The combat routines and Magik spells add much to the player's interest but where this game really excels is in its storyline; as the game unfolds it becomes more and more clear a great deal of thought has gone into its construction. *Red Moon* is computer entertainment at its best.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: a long adventure which is quite easy to play
Graphics: on every location, generally good
Presentation: good choice of colours but text cramped
Input facility: some way beyond verb/noun
Response: reasonably fast
Special Features: type-ahead allows program to always accept input regardless
General Rating: has an appeal for everyone

Atmosphere	9
Vocabulary	9
Logic	9
Addictive Quality	9
Overall Value	9

WARLORDS

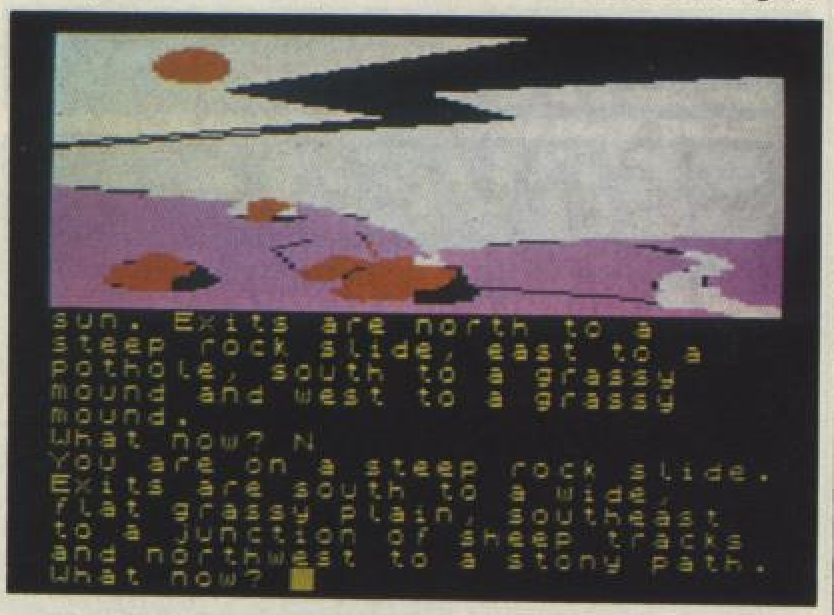
Producer: Interceptor Micros
Price: **£5.50**
Language: **machine code**
Authors: **David M Banner & Terry Greer**

First there was *Message from Andromeda*, then *Forest at World's End* followed by *Jewels of Babylon*, the review of which caused a bit of a stir in the Interceptor camp. The reason for this last was probably that game's wonderful graphics which would seem to warrant a favourable review no matter what. For my taste the game was far too similar to its predecessors. *Warlord*, the fourth game to be produced for the Spectrum by Interceptor and written by David Banner, is again similar in style to *Jewels of Babylon* but might just have the edge with its interesting Roman/mythical gods theme and superlative graphics.

In the middle of the first century, Roman legions led by the feared Vesparian, pushing northward toward the Celtic hill-fort tribes are confident of victory as they advance, but abruptly find their progress halted at the Scottish border by a powerful Northern Warlord.

Both sides call upon their gods, but such is the ferocity of their fighting another solution is sought. The warring factions decide to transport a champion from each army through time and space to one of the Celtic Otherworlds. The side whose champion returns to the real world first is the victor. The Romans choose their finest centurion, the Celts their Warlord. You take on the role of The Celtic Warlord and you must find your way back to the real world before your equally determined Roman opponent.

You begin with a picture postcard graphic of a wooded vale at the foot of a mountain. Impressive pictures such as this are scattered throughout the adventure and are of the highest standard — certainly some of the best I have seen on a Spectrum. They appear instantaneously and only on your first visit to a location. On pressing a key the picture is taken from the screen to leave you with the curious text organisation seen in the rest of this series where input at the bottom causes the location description (with details like exits) to scroll up and off the top of the screen. The thing is, there is not a jot of text









in the middle — makes me laugh every time I see this. The location descriptions are as terse as ever eg 'A Mountain Slope', 'A Woodland Path', 'The Rocky Path', occasionally blossoming out into the likes of 'The Vale of Kells. Sunlight filters through the leafy canopy made by ancient, towering oak trees.' Hence it would be more accurate to say many locations are represented by location names rather than location descriptions.

Again, as in the rest of the series, the vocabulary is off-beat with the likes of ENTER POOL or GO POOL spurned in favour of CLIMB INTO POOL. How much you think this a good/bad point depends on how long you like to spend in your adventures guessing words at each problem. How logical you perceive the problems to be will depend upon your grasp of the Roman/Celtic mythology which drives the game.

What can be said, is that few of the problems are especially difficult. The plot of this adventure is a shade stilted. Examining things which are not thought relevant always reveals nothing, and if there's no point in say, climbing a tree, then the program will not let you do it. Some of the objects you find create no mental imagery whatsoever. Take the piece of iron you pick up: examining it reveals nothing, as it is just a lump of metal — another boring artefact to be picked up and discarded along the way. So much for creating and sustaining the atmosphere.

A few changes have been made since *Jewels of Babylon*: two which I noticed were the addition of a score and the absence of a maze in the forty percent I completed (which suggests you might just get away with the one maze). What can most certainly be concluded is if you liked the predecessors in this Interceptor series you will like this one. All in all I thought it an interesting diversion if only for the graphics which are worth seeing in their own right.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: quite easy and not that many problems
Graphics: not many but those which appear are excellent
Presentation: colours OK but screen could have been better utilized
Input facility: often requires sentences
Response: instantaneous
General rating: rather lacking in text, but if you liked the other Interceptor games you'll like this one.

Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	6
Logic	5
Addictive quality	7
Overall value	7



MALICE IN WONDERLAND



Producer: Sentient
Retail price £2.99
Language: Quill
Authors: Lumpsoft

You might remember me reviewing Lumpsoft's *The Key to Time* a little while back. Well, here we have their follow up marketed by Sentient Software and, whereas their first game borrowed much from a BBC television program with a time machine and a Doctor, so this game borrows from an ITV program featuring Mother and Steed (giving any more makes it too easy!). Mother has decided that all new agents need a good work out on a training assignment before joining the team.

Reading a letter from Steed given you at the start, you learn that your man in the Zndrovian Embassy has been murdered and the object of the training exercise is to bring back the name of the murderer and the weapon used. A card has some questions in Zndrovian on it, a necessity, as no-one in the embassy speaks English. The embassy turns out to be a manor house and the murderer to be one of the five surviving occupants. Examining the body of Count Drezisird, the murdered agent, does not prove conclusive as this excerpt from the game shows: 'He's been stabbed, strangled, poisoned, shot and hit with a blunt instrument.' This humorous aspect to the game can be more subtle as in this earlier description, 'I am standing on an immaculate lawn. The drive is to the north. I can also see: A shrubbery. Another shrubbery, only not as tall as the first, giving a sort of two-level effect. A rose garden. A rabbit burrow. The rabbit must be about six feet tall, if the size of the hole is anything to go by!'. Later, GET PLAQUE plays on words to give the following reply: 'You should try not brushing your teeth'.

Central to the run of things, as you might expect from the title, are some pretty weird goings on. In particular there is a strange mirror. Look into it and characters start appearing in the dining room ,beside you, the marble staircase cannot be surmounted with UP as previously but now requires GO STAIRS, and what's more, they don't lead to the same place they used to! Looking into the mirror again reverses all these changes.

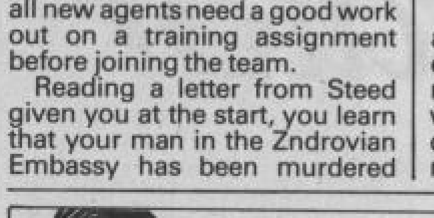
Something I never quite managed to work out during all this is how or where to play the mysterious game called wom with the womball found in the first few frames. There again, I didn't get anywhere near finding out who committed the crime — every suspect interviewed accuses someone else. Things aren't made any easier by characters turning up in locations only after some time playing the game, like the time I played for ages before the gardener suddenly turned up in the garden.

Malice in Wonderland is an interesting adventure with some good prompts (eg I SHOW CARD TO BUTLER and the program prompts me to SHOW BUTLER THE CARD) along with some fine touches of humour. I couldn't find out who did it and I think you might find it quite a challenge also.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: becomes more difficult the further you play
Graphics: none
Presentation: white on blue
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: Instant
General rating: original plot

Atmosphere	6
Vocabulary	6
Logic	5
Addictive quality	5
Overall value	5



ADVENTURE TRAIL REVIEW RATINGS

ATMOSPHERE: reflects quality of location description and graphics and how credibly characters behave.

VOCABULARY: the completeness of the vocabulary and friendliness of response. All words and associated words (objects etc) in location descriptions should be included.

LOGIC: reflects the logic of the problems encountered and whether or not you are likely to be killed without warning or chance of escape.

DEBUGGING: indicates the level of crashproofing. A program should not be crashed simply by making an incorrect entry or by pressing an unfortunate combination of keys.

OVERALL: general rating based on price and the other ratings BUT NOT AN AVERAGE OF THE OTHER RATINGS.



PROJECT X — THE MICROMAN

Producer: Compass
Retail price: **£2.99**
Language: **Quill & Illustrator**
Authors: **T Kemp & J Lemmon**



This game uses every programming aid in the book but looking at the result this may not be such a bad thing. The loading screen acknowledges the use of Melbourne Draw (and very nice the screen looks too) and the use of the Quill and Illustrator, along with the curious 'Patch' for the main program. As with most things it's not what you've got but what you do with it and in this instance what Compass have done isn't at all bad with some additional features not normally found on such games.

Machine code screen and sound effects are much in evidence. Telephones ring, sirens wail and the exploding screen effect which greets your untimely exit from a game will have you jumping out of your seat with fright. Should you be beaten in this way not all is lost due to a feature which greatly impressed me. This game boasts a STORE/RECALL from memory facility which allows you to save your position using STORE before attempting anything dangerous (or silly). If the inevitable happens and you die a death then you can simply type RECALL to return you instantly to the state of play before you died. When I say entering something silly I do not include swear words which unceremoniously crash the program with no recourse to the type of joke seen in Ramjam's *Valkyrie 17*. The game has 130 locations (30 of which are split screen graphics), 80 objects (many illustrated by UDG's), 80 messages and a 150 word vocabulary.

You play a Professor Neil Richards who, whilst working in his laboratory at home, irradiates himself in a freak accident. Panicking, he runs out of the house and drives off down the road to his colleague's laboratory a few miles away. While speeding down the road a tyre bursts and the car swerves into a tree. Your task is to get to your colleague's house but this is made all the more difficult by two almost insurmountable obstacles. One is your size which has apparently been reduced to about that of a pen, which must be as a result of the animal miniaturization experiments you were carrying out at the time of the accident. The second difficulty is the COM 2 high-tech computer controlling your colleague's lab security. Its main task is to stop you from entering the lab, something you must do to attain the solution to your problem.

Though I liked the theme of this adventure a lot, and the presentation of the text is very smart and helpful, its vocabulary left a lot to be desired. Generally only one word set will work in any one situation (take entering the shed where all verbose attempts ended in failure while the almost idiotic IN does the trick). This can make things very difficult when the program chooses strange words (take crossing a crevasse with a twig, where CROSS TWIG is not accepted while CROSS BRIDGE is, this when there has been no mention of a bridge!). A limited and inconsistent vocabulary need not ring the death knell for a game if it makes good use of prompts (perhaps 'The twig now forms a bridge across the gap') but, sadly, this game makes little use of prompts. To compensate for these shortcomings the game does offer one or two refinements. Take a handle early on where TURN HANDLE gives a slightly open window, WIND HANDLE does the full job — very clever I thought.

The story of this adventure is dominated by your small size and on the whole the game gives a realistic feeling of being small, for example, using an egg cosy to wrap around yourself and a thimble for a helmet, but in other areas it left me wondering. Would it be possible for such a diminutive chappie to loosen the belt from a scarecrow without first climbing up, or to cut glass with a diamond ring — a feat difficult even for a normal sized person.

Project X is a fine game with a different storyline. Its screen presentation is super with different text colours to break up the screen. Where it falls down is in its vocabulary, which is unfriendly, and with its graphics, which are simple and generally poor. For just under three pounds, though, it is not a bad buy and is available from **Compass Software, 63 Cozens Rd, Norwich NR1·1JP.**

COMMENTS

Difficulty: many tricky points due to unfriendly vocabulary
Graphics: some, generally poor
Presentation: good use of colour in redefined text
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: instant Quill response
Special features: store/recall within memory without recourse to tape (although has save tape also)
General rating: good value at £2.99

Atmosphere	7
Vocabulary	5
Logic	6
Addictive quality	6
Overall value	6



Before we get into the letters I must tell you about Roger Gerrett's adventure helpline and newsletter otherwise he won't stop ringing me! Via his phone-in helpline he can offer help on a large number of adventures particularly those available on the CBM64. This service is available free of charge every evening between 19:00 and 21:00 to any adventurer. Roger also produces a newsletter which costs 50p per issue and includes advice, hints, general articles and game reviews. I was however a little perturbed to see Castle Blackstar being the star review over the likes of Lords of Time and Snowball when in the same issue Castle Blackstar was being sold as a star buy!

You can obtain further information on the newsletter or help from the helpline on (0245) 442098.

PICTURESQUE BORDER

Dear Derek,
I eagerly typed in Nick Page's Level 9 listing from your July issue, glad of something to relieve the strain on my poor old eyes as I played these excellent adventures well into the early hours. The first thing I noticed was that a dollar sign was printed after each command I entered. Now that didn't seem right (Level 9 are, after all, a British Company, so if anything was to be printed surely it should be a pound sign!). After dissecting your listing I found the error, the first number on the second last line should be 32, not 36, which would print a space over the cursor (or you could change it to 96 to print a pound sign, but that didn't look right).

So now I had an improved version of Colossal Adventure, but it wasn't long before I realised that it was far from perfect and rather than reducing eye-strain, my eyes were getting really messed up. The cause of this predicament was the border which flashed white every time I pressed a key when inputting my commands. Nick states in his letter that you can't change the display to white on black without the border changing. Well, I for one am not willing to put up with a flickery border if it can be avoided, so I loaded up my trusty Picturesque disassembler and delved into the mysteries of Level 9's code. Sometime later there was a cry of Eureka! Yes, I'd found the offending bytes and a couple of pokes later I had Colossal running with a lovely eye-pleasing display and am now able to play it until dawn.

The two pokes required to stabilise the border in Colossal Adventure are:

POKE 26029,24 and POKE 26033,8.

These should be added to LINE 10 of the BASIC program in the July issue. Of course nothing in this world is simple, and the pokes for the other Level 9 games are slightly different:

POKE 26027,24 and POKE 26031,8

added to LINE 10 will do the trick for these adventures.

OK. Well I hope that has proved useful, now I would like to pick your undoubted brains, if I may, with a few problems I'm having with a couple of adventures.

First, one of my favourite adventures, Twin Kingdom Valley: how do I dispose of the dragon in the castle to get my grubby little hands on that master key which the beast possesses? Also, what's the holdall for? How do I use it?

Now onto an adventure with which you are obviously very familiar, Kentilla. I've noticed you've been giving a few hints on this one lately, but most people seem to have got further than me, so not wishing to appear a fool may I enquire as to how I should go about entering Tylon's castle? I'm sure it's obvious but I must be too intelligent to think of it (!).

Enough of my problems. Now let's see if I can offer some assistance. M Vickery is obviously playing Dream Software's Quest for the Holy Grail and the solution to passing the white rabbit is quite logical really — lob the Holy Hand Grenade at it! (Dig with the spade at the very muddy verge to find the Grenade).
Mike Peach, Crewkerne, Somerset.

I seem to have lost my notes on Twin Kingdom Valley, ***so I'm afraid I can't answer your query at the moment, but I'll try and answer it next month. To enter Tylon's castle you need help from Zelda. You must first rescue Timandra and take her to Zelda, then go to the castle and wait. DB***

ADDICTED

Dear Derek,
I have to disagree with you on Castle Blackstar. This might have been a good game a couple of years ago, but to my mind it's dated and rather dull now.

I am poised to check out Out ▷



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of the Shadows. Amazingly it's on sale locally in a camera shop in Huyton. Which carries some computer games as a sideline!!!

May I recommend a game to you — Ring of Darkness (Wintersoft). You gave it a so-so review in Issue 6. The thing is — this is one of those games that takes patience and a lot of work and time before you can really appreciate it. The concept sounds similar to Shadows, going up levels through gaining experience on quests. It took me a couple of months of addicted slogging to complete it, but it was all worth it. I procured my meatiest equipment by stealing it, by the way! — definitely worth attempting 'cos eventually it's possible to obtain a deflector suit and a laser gun!!! It was brilliant going underground 5 or 6 levels and taking on the really big'uns. Ahhh, the thrill of being stalked by some nasty who may be able to rot your armour or drain your mind, or chancing your arm on a possible monster-trapped chest should not be missed. Graphic Advanced D and D!!! I can only urge you to persevere, Derek, It will be worth it.

Terry Andrews, Huyton, Merseyside.

PERFECTLY PERFECT

Dear Derek,
I thought it was time to put pen to paper, scribe to parchment, blood to skin or in other words write a letter. I think that your adventure column is the best part of the magazine along with Signpost. The comments on games reviewed are on very well chosen aspects of adventure games but I think that you ought to add a new heading — Number of Locations. This would be very useful for cartographers (not quite a Lloyd Mangram Long Word Dictionary qualifier?) to see if they've got all the locations mapped. Otherwise everything is perfectly perfect. But, (oh no! I hear you moan) how about printing maps of adventure games, because in this department you are being outshone by that little, no-good upstart Robin Candy.

So for starters I enclose a map of Gremlins as well as the complete solution.

Wayne Morledge, Ilkeston, Derbyshire.

You make some very interesting points there, Wayne. To give the number of locations either requires me to complete an adventure (quite rare for a review — especially these days) or for this information to be given with the game (some companies supply a cassette only, with the attitude of — here's the game, now get on with it). As for printing maps this may well be a good idea — it all depends on the quality of maps sent in and whether Oli has the time to spruce them up and draw them out. This last point is especially valid when it comes to your own great work enclosed in your letter for Gremlins. ***DB***

ARTFUL DODGER

Dear Sir,
I am writing to give you a tip on how to collect large sums of money on Dun Darach.

First go to the gambling house in Iomain and save the game. Then keep putting your money on table B and leave it there. Save the game after each win (in case you loose next go) but don't remove winnings.

I tried this last night out of frustration at getting nowhere and amassed 10.5 million Iride. This is a bit over the top, and I could only put 3 million in the bank before my arm seized up.

Also when I buy a thieves guild licence, I still get robbed by pickpockets (not money, just objects) but do not get arrested.

Paul Bennetto, Plymouth.

TAKEN FOR A RIDE

Dear Derek,
I am a reader new to CRASH magazine and was very pleased to find a good range of tips and clues in your Signpost pages.

Recently I bought the Sherlock adventure and have become quite addicted to it during my spare time. Anyway, the reason I decided to write, is because I have found something quite odd during game play. I hear several people need to know how to stop Lestrade wrapping up the case on Monday night and I think my method could help some poor devils out there.

When returning from Leatherhead on Monday night, follow Lestrade from the train and onto Kings Cross Road. Now as soon as he hails a cab input 'say to cabbie, go to Aldergate Street'. You then realise that Lestrade has climbed into the cab and has been whisked off before he can give the cabbie his destination. I've found if you catch a cab yourself to Aldergate Street you find Lestrade sitting in the first cab, waiting patiently out of the way.

This enables the novice to explore London in peace, unhindered and collect clues but there is a snag. Getting Lestrade out of the way is OK up to a point but you need him in the end!

Now please could you help me. I am sick to death of trying to decode the two notes in Basil's pad. I've tried everything, I've even written to Keith Campbell of C & VG for help (*! -DB*), but his clue was small and very mysterious as usual. I now think my copy is bugged. Keith Campbell came up with some rubbish using letter substitution on the basis of 'E' equalling 'H' but I can't work it out. Maybe I'm just stupid!

Ian Eaton, Hednesford, Staffs.

Well Ian, there is no simple code to help you here. You must count the frequency of each letter and relate this to what we know about the frequency of different letters in the alphabet. (What



we know? — you might ask, well, things like E is the most common, A is second most common etc). After this look for single letters which are either I or A. Then you might try and track down THE or other simple two or three letter words. As E does look like it is H, Keith's advice would seem to be sound. DB.

And now down to some adventure queries! The code used is the same as usual.

Philip Fleming ***of Billingham asks:*** 'Can you help me with *Mafia Contract*? How do you get the door key in the hotel? What do you do after you have killed Ferrelo? What can you do in the shop?

On to Subsunk: how do you open the safe? How do you open the rusted hatch? I've tried burnt toast and the knife.'

To get the key go down in the lift and SJOH CFMM, TBZ LFZ. From the shop you can get a CVMMFU QSPPG WFTU BOE B HVO. After you have killed Ferrelo go and see the Boss. As for Subsunk, I've no idea.

Ian Harrison ***from Llandudno writes:*** 'In *The Hobbit* I have killed the Dragon via the Bard, Killed the Bard and taken the Dragon's treasure. What do I do now?'

I think killing the Bard was rather antisocial! You must go home and deposit the treasure in the chest.

Still on The Hobbit ***— in the July issue I stated that to escape from the goblin dungeon you must SAY TO THORIN 'CARRY ME EAST', I forgot to mention that you must also SAY TO THORIN 'OPEN WINDOW' first.***

Also in the July issue I spilled the beans that the wizard's hat in Mountains of Ket ***is across the crevasse and that you need to drink the Elixir to cross.*** Charles Haggerty ***now asks the whereabouts of the elixir. GJMM CPUUMF BU TISJOF XJUI QPPM.***

Douglas Bell ***in Montrose is having difficulty changing from a frog in*** Witch's Cauldron ***without being eaten, trapped or drowned. Try UVSO UISFF UJNFT, TBZ UBDZTTVQ.***

Keith Trevis ***from Droitwich is having progress in*** Knight's Quest ***blocked by an unfriendly snake. You could try TUSBOHMF TOBLF.***

Neil White ***from Bradford asks:*** 'In *Kentilla*, could you tell me why I am told I see no ward when entering the obviously correct solution to the ward of disintegration?'

I think it's probably because you can't see the ward. To see it you must XFBS UIF HPME SJOH.

P. Gregory of Portsmouth is having trouble with the magpie in Eye of Bain. ***To get the objects from its nest you must EJH VQ B XPSN BOE UISPX XPSN.***

ENCRYPTION CORNER

It's easy to speak Brewster!

Using this handy decoding scroll, just check off the letters in 'Brewster' one by one, writing down the English equivalent, and all will be revealed:

ENGLISH: ZABCDEFGHIJKL
BREWSTER: ABCDEFGHIJKLM

ENGLISH: MNOPQRSTUVWXY
BREWSTER: NOPQRSTUVWXYZ

S·U·P·E·R·H·E·R·O·E·S

JOHN WILSON from Rochdale is this month's superhero for completing Witch's Cauldron **at 7.37pm on 12th February 1985. I've started Superheroes a month earlier than planned as we've already had our first applicant! The first person to complete a particular adventure will achieve fame (the boss won't allow any fortunes!) by having his or her name and achievements published. To qualify you must give the date you completed the game (it shouldn't be much different from the postmark on the envelope), a few hints on how you achieved it and most importantly what happened at the end. Games reviewed before the July issue don't qualify as they will already have been completed many times.**

All applications to be a Superhero must be sent to SIGNPOST (SUPERHEROES), CRASH MAGAZINE, P.O. Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.

The famous World War Two pilot was sitting in the mess. (No, he wasn't in the CRASH offices, it's where famous World War Two pilots had cups of tea in between flying missions, dearie me!) He looked at his navigator, with a knowing smile. Tonight was the night they were due to fly their first real mission with a specially modified Lancaster bomber, over enemy territory, to attack an important enemy dam.

For months they had been practising their approach techniques over a remote stretch of water, Somewhere in England. At last they were going for real.

'How do you feel, Map Minion?' Ponsonby-Smythe asked. . . .

NEAOOOW!
DAKKA DAKKA BOOM!

'Heavy flak to Starboard, Skipper, unclear as to what's happening, but I reckon we're under attack . . . according to me map, we're due over a flak battery . . . over'

NEEEEEOW!
(flashes of bright light)
CRUMP!

'What's that about a flat battery, navigation, over . . .'

'It's a squadron of Stukas . . . looks like they've just scrambled from their airdrome . . . coming in at ten past one Skipper . . . I've got them in my sights, plain and clear'

'Well stop getting edgy, and use the trigger, gunner . . . over'

'What's all this about batteries, Oh Map minion, I though you could navigate . . . over'

'All right, all right, don't scold me, I'm just trying to do my best, and. . . .'

Crash Competition

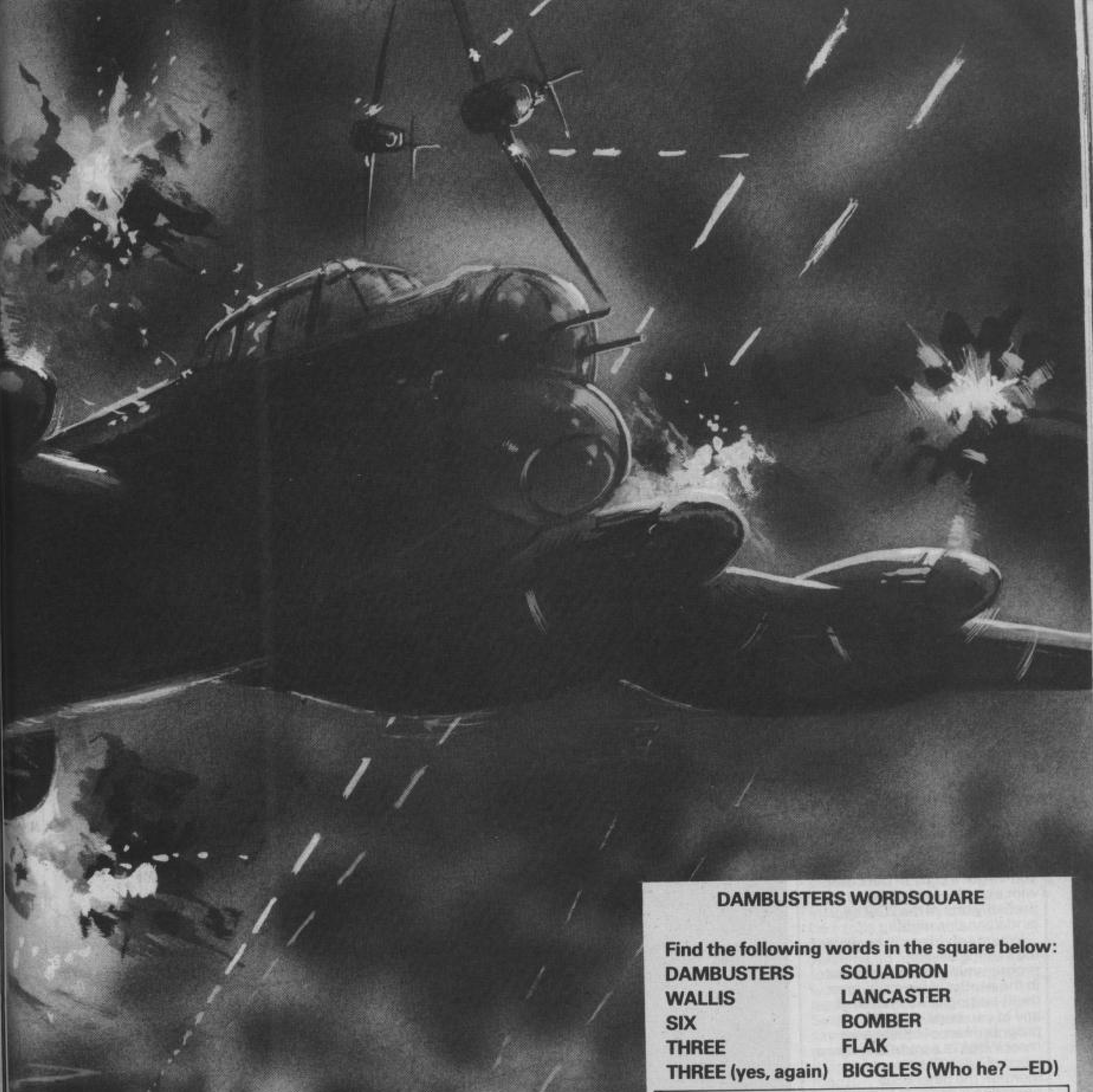
Drrriiing! Drrriiing!

Once again the shrill tones of your favourite minion's alarm clock penetrated his consciousness, disturbing a dream which had occupied his troubled, slumbering mind. The few hours sleep he had managed to squeeze into a hectic schedule — between removing pages from Issue 19 and playing US Gold's new release, Dambusters — were ended. It was time to get up, trudge up the long hill to the mess in CRASH Towers, and start another day. .

First telephone call of the day was to US Gold. Day gets off to good start. US Gold lady says lovely idea to do a Dambusters competition — happy to offer thirty copies of the game as prizes. Good stuff. Write competition . . .

US Gold's latest release for the Spectrum is *Dambusters*, a simulation based on the exploits of the famous 633 squadron. Armed with Barnes Wallis's 'Bouncing Bomb' they attacked vital dams during the Second World War. In this game, you fly a Lancaster bomber over enemy territory, and attempt to effect a hit on a dam . . . are you up to it?

Well, to get you in the mood, here's a cunningly devised



DAMBUSTERS WORDSQUARE

Find the following words in the square below:

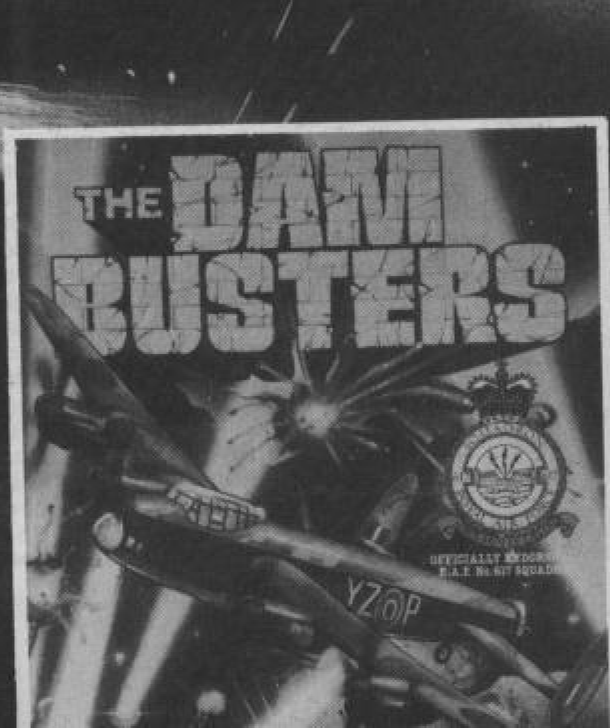
DAMBUSTERS	**SQUADRON**
WALLIS	**LANCASTER**
SIX	**BOMBER**
THREE	**FLAK**
THREE (yes, again)	**BIGGLES (Who he? —ED)**

D	A	M	D	R	E	T	S	A	C	N	A	L
A	G	B	Q	R	F	H	F	U	B	L	S	A
M	G	S	U	A	L	L	Q	A	W	I	T	W
B	I	Q	W	S	A	S	T	U	Q	S	X	M
U	B	L	A	K	T	T	H	R	R	Q	D	S
E	E	Q	L	U	E	X	K	E	L	U	Q	S
N	N	E	L	R	Q	I	T	W	O	A	U	E
O	S	R	R	W	S	S	U	H	R	D	A	L
R	L	T	A	H	U	I	I	S	R	R	L	G
D	A	M	H	B	T	B	X	E	A	E	L	G
A	K	I	M	K	I	O	B	Q	F	N	E	I
U	X	A	B	G	U	M	R	A	T	T	A	B
Q	D	I	G	I	O	S	I	L	L	A	W	S
S	I	L	D	B	A	R	N	H	B	F	K	A

NAME ____________________

ADDRESS ____________________

wordsquare, containing a whole range of bouncing letters and no more of these 'ZZAP! rules OK' messages which the horrid Gary Penn sneaked into our last one. OK? Find the hidden words, ring them in pen and whizz your entry to DAMBUSTERS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB to arrive by 26th September, when the draw will be made to determine the thirty lucky winners.



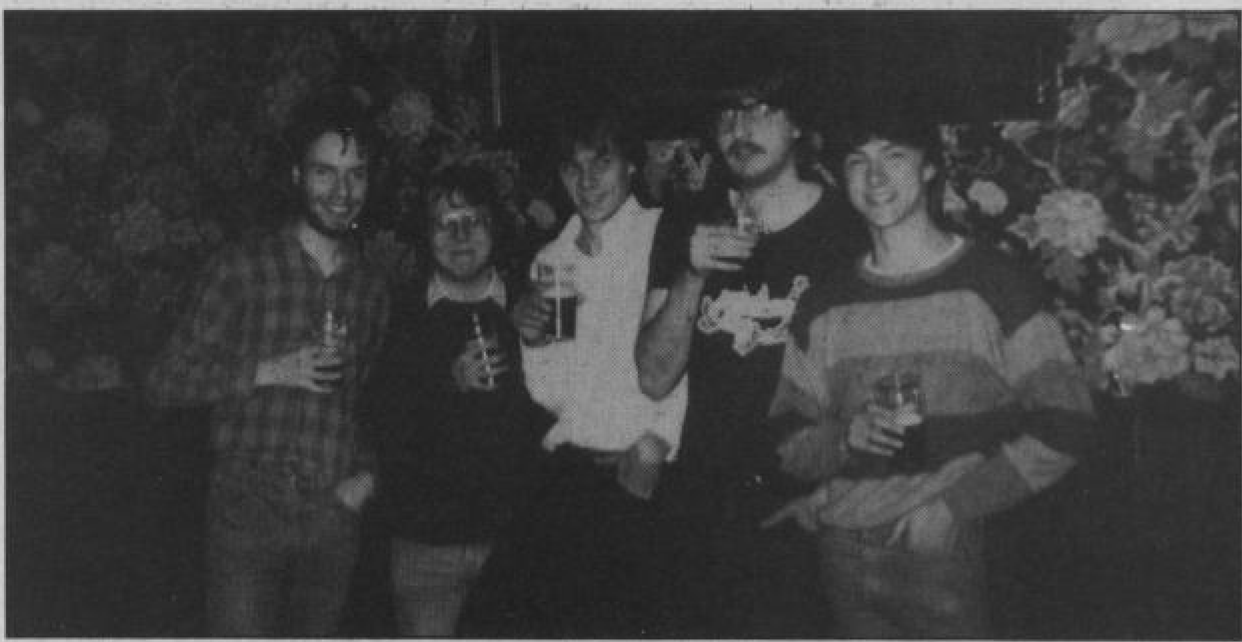
A little while ago, someone found Graham Stafford from Design Design standing in the middle of the office, looking thirsty. Sorting through the rupees and coat buttons that some disreputable person has been putting into the tea kitty, we found enough money to cover a pint of Old Flatulence *with which to slake Graham's thirst.*

Off we trotted to a local hostelry, and by the time we left, we'd arranged to receive the lowdown on the development of Des-Des's latest programming extravaganza. Straight from Graham's word processor, in installments.

Herewith Part The First... in which we meet the Design Design team, and take a peek at their natural habitat.



Surely this space should be filled with programmers? No, hang on, maybe the pub's open....



... ah yes, here they are. What a reputable bunch of dipsos they appear to be! Simon's lost his beard, and the photographer's lost his focus. Must be the OLD FLATULENCE Bitter taking effect!

Design-Design! ('*Who*?', shout millions of people across the country.) **Design-Design**, I say. Possibly the greatest software house of all time, and the most modest! For those of you who didn't shout '*Who?*', '*What!*' may be more appropriate. Well we're a bunch of mad-living loonies from Manchester, with an impressive collection of motoring offences! We also happen to write some of the best software on the market. Our programmers, whilst bordering on the psycotic, do at least know what they're doing.

Many people have wondered and asked about the conditions and environment taken to produce a Design-Design programmer. Take 2Wook 1for example, Master of the 6809 and the pint glass. His day starts when he staggers down to the kitchen in search of the traditional morning mug of coffee & cig. Well I say morning, Wook works on a 36 hour cycle as opposed to everyone else's 24, so this can be any hour of the day or night. He then works until the pubs are open, drinks until they close, comes home and falls down the stairs. If any of you've got a copy of Dark Star with a cracked case, it's probably one of the 200 he landed on one night!

Whilst sobering up, he works until falling asleep, programming or poking about in the depths of his multi-user, multi-tasking OS-9 system. If any of you budding 6809 programmers out there ever meet Wook at a trade fair, take a word of advice and never mention the other 6809 operating system, FLEX; at least not if you wish to con a drink out of him!

Graham (Nose city) Stafford, on the other hand is far more suave and sophisticated (SMUG). Clean living, engaged, and up bright and early at 2.00pm every day, Graham is the epitome of the ideal programmer. Works regular hours, cheap to feed, understands the meaning of the word DEADLINE and even takes his computer with him when visiting his fiance at weekends. What more can you say about such a perfect representative of this industry except isn't it time he thought of taking up macramé?

Who's next? Ah yes, the prime of our little clutch, Mr. Brattel, given his formal address in keeping with the general 'Man About Town' image that he projects. Always cool and calm in a crisis, he is the only guy I know to drive a car over a cliff and climb out muttering 'Eer, I think we've done it this time Psi!'. He thought the whole incident hysterically funny until the thought 'What's Graham going to say?' occurred to him. Practically the only thing that can provoke a violent reaction from the illustrious Mr Brattel is uncooperative hardware. There are several battered Spectrums littered around the house to testify to this. Outside of programming, Simon builds things. The list is almost endless, his own computers, audio power-amps, things to put in Beebs that make them belch, an endless series of pre-amps and things to interfere with Wook's radio equipment. Wook, by the way, is a practising radio amateur, and target for many radio-orientated practical jokes.

Well there you have it, three totally different people who go to make up the Design-Design in-house programming team. Still, enough of the individuals and on to how this rather unusual team functions. No one program is written by two or more of the programmers, rather each one works on his own project. Work usually starts at some arbitrary point in the afternoon, after which the house reverberates to the sound of programmers stampeding up and down the stairs, searching for coffee, bursting in to each other's rooms for advice/help and venting their opinions on the latest LPs or CDs they've bought. (**Graham**: Nik Kershaw, The Riddle. **Wook**: Bob Marley, Three Little Birds, Dub & interminably extended 12' version. **Simon** (*Cliff, wot cliff?*) **Brattel**: Sting, The Dream of the Blue Turtles).

During this complex interplay of personalities, ideas and opinions, the work of each of the three becomes subtly

IN THE WOOKIE's HOLE

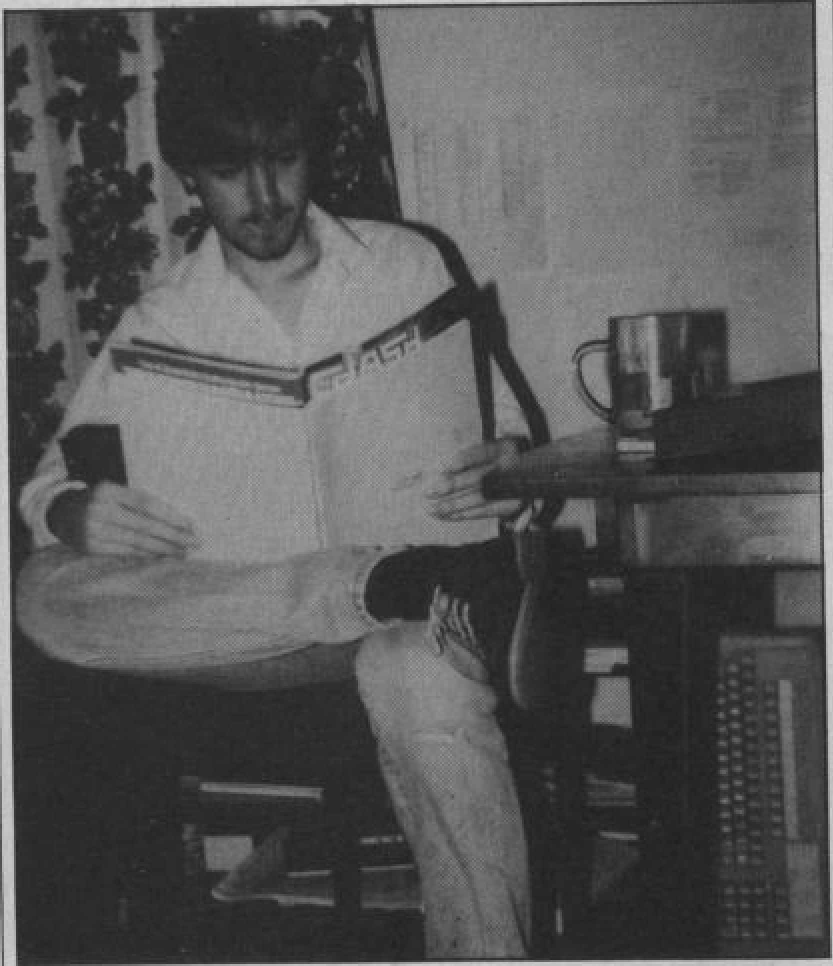
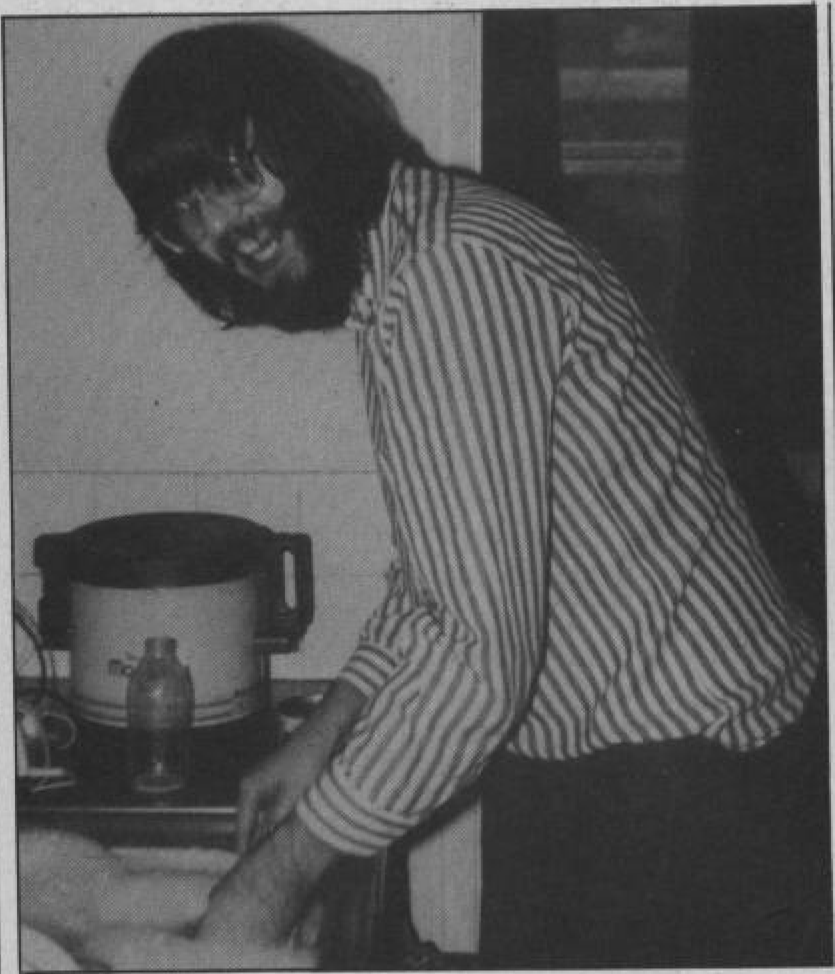


Exhibit Three. Graham Stafford. The ideal programmer — cheap to feed, housetrained and about to become a respectable married member of society on 21st December this year. We hear that Si REALLY wrote this article, not Graham — more details next ish.



A Rare Action Shot. Simon Brattel washes up in a beard as part of the Design Design design for living. This action shot of an MSX being scrubbed clean should win awards.

influenced by the other two. The upshot of this is that each program, though the work of one programmer, inherits that indefinable something that marks it as a Design-Design product.

There are a few, not instantly obvious, advantages to working in the hours of darkness. We live on a fairly major B-road, so the absence of traffic noise at night is most welcome. Also, Graham finds it disturbing to glance out of his first floor window to find those on the top deck of a GMT bus gapeing at him from eight feet away. Some people have fairies at the bottom of their gardens; we have a bus stop! Simon too, is happy with the nocturnal existence; here is a man who hates to be hot, or even warm, thus the absence of solar radiation adding to the heat dumped by his computer gear is most welcome. Wook on the other hand, defines day as when he's awake, and night as when he's not. I'm not convinced he realises that there is a relationship between light, dark and the hands on his watch!

Admittedly, one cannot just pop round the corner for the occasional bottle of coke, but there is a 24 hour petrol station up the road for such things. As everyone is usually in bed by 9.00am, Dave is left unsupervised in the office of an hour or so until Johnny arrives circa 10.00am. This is a cause of great concern, as nobody seems to know what he does in this hour. There is a theory that he gets the milk in, but this is unproven at the time of writing.

Enough of this work rubbish, what do people do in their free time? Well there's the obvious answer: The PUB. One advantage of living where we do is that the Junction Inn is a mere 200 yards from the front door, so nobody has to drive. As to other extra-curricular activities, these are as diverse as the programmers. Johnny, Myself and Simon all own lasers, and Johnny is developing a healthy interest in holography. Simon and I are more interested in sound to light units and the possibilites of drawing things on the ceiling at trade fairs. It's also good fun waving lasers at people leaving the pub. Water pistols and sunroofs provide good entertainment in the summer months too (see SPECTACLE for details).

Then there's the traditional Black Rock Sands Expedition. This involves everyone piling into the cars and belting off to the west coast of Wales, for a day of sun, sand, beach racing and sitting in traffic jams with all the other tourists. There's the endless series of totally useless electronic gadgets people build, flashing LEDs, strange noise producers and even a six foot long VU meter, built by Johnny for no readily explainable reason. Wook builds all his own radio gear, a task which takes up a fair amount of his time, but does produce some nice end products. This has sparked off many rows of the 'Your computer is interfering with my radio'/'Your radio is coming over my hi-fi' type. I, however, am the proud owner of an amplifier which annoys Wook's radios. Having said that, Wook has recently swiped it on the pretext of curing the problem. I have been awaiting it's return for a considerable number of days. . . .

So there you are, a brief insight into our life style. It may be a trifle unconventional, but aside from the odd dispute over washing up and who's turn it is to make the coffee, it is a great way to live. In closing I shall leave you with a quotation from Simon, which in some ways says more than I could if Crash gave me 50 pages. (Think about it Graeme, a SPECTACLE in your mag!).

'I look upon Design-Design as a viable commune' - **S. Brattel.**

The Wookie, currently in possession of the Design Design communal beard, uses it to polish a Pool Cue. No strangers to sport and exercise these lads. . . .



PLANNING OUR FUTURE. . .

On the top floor of an Insurance company office in Southampton, Rod Cousens is planning our future. As the ex-Managing Director of top software house Quicksilva, and the brains behind *Soft Aid*, the industry's bid to help the starving in Ethiopia, he is well qualified to do so, some might argue. After a 'period of exile', as he puts it, Cousens is all set to launch a new software house, intended to take over where he left off at Quicksilva.



IN THE BEGINNING

Rod Cousens didn't become involved with micros until 1981, when he was introduced to Nick Lambert and John Hollis, Quicksilva's original founders. The firm grew steadily and was responsible for a series of innovations — including the use of various 'labels' (such as Pixel), and the launch of a separate programming hot-house, **Software Studios**.

The Game Lords club was the brainchild of Loonie-in-residence, Mark Eyles, who also dreamt up the fantasy world of **The Faluvian Empire** as a backdrop for many of the firm's games. In conjunction with **Bug Byte**, Quicksilva organised the Quick-Byte spoof award ceremony, at which **Clives** — busts of Sir Clive Sinclair, like the Oscars in another industry — were forced upon infamous industry figures.

These ideas weren't wholly original, but they were all new to the software industry when they arrived, and demonstrated a professionalism and definite direction which most other software houses lacked. 'At that time, with the greatest respect to all the other companies, things rather happened by accident — by luck, rather than judgement', said Cousens.

Sadly, much of the pioneering firm's identity was submerged when Quicksilva was bought by **Argus**, part of the massive BET group, last year. Cousens explained that the Argus deal came when the original founders of Quicksilva decided they'd had enough: 'the structure of the industry was stifling their creativity — they wanted a complete break'. After a spell in the West Indies, Lambert and Hollis now live in the Channel Islands.

Rod Cousens left Quicksilva a while later, when Argus decided to move the firm to their London offices from Southampton. He attributes the lacklustre performance of the firm since the takeover to the trauma of eight months of negotiation. In view of the crisis that has overtaken the micro industry over the past year, we asked if he had sold out at the right moment: '. . . it may be viewed like that in some quarters — but I don't necessarily subscribe to that view', came the reply.

SOFT AID

At the beginning of 1985 Rod Cousens came up with the idea for the *Soft Aid* compilation tape to raise money for starving people. Ironically, the idea came at the Quick-Byte dinner at the London Hilton, when trade magazine editor Greg Ingham asked the industry to raise money for Ethiopia. 'Like everyone else, I couldn't fail to be affected by the television coverage of the famine. It seemed to me that the software industry should be in a position, as it projects high technology, to assist Third World countries.

'It was a lot of work, but it wasn't difficult, in that the software houses involved were willing to participate from the outset. But it's not just the software houses — authors, duplicators, artists and distributors all have to be persuaded to work for nothing or at cost. That's asking a lot from companies, especially in these times.'

The cover of the cassette, which depicts a starving person, has attracted some criticism, but Cousens is unrepentant about the picture. 'What is happening in Ethiopia is very emotive and very harrowing — I think it would be wrong to do anything else other than to promote that on the inlay — that's the point we are putting over.'

The tape, for the C64 and Spectrum, was originally intended to raise £100,000 for the appeal. In fact, it has dominated the charts all summer, and over £350,000 has been passed on to Bob Geldorf's **Band Aid Trust**. 'The results of *Soft Aid* have surprised everyone — not least Bob Geldorf. It's a total credit to both the software industry and software buyers. It would be nice if we could do something — perhaps an Amstrad and a BBC version — to ensure we reach half a million pounds.'

SOFTWARE POPS

Band Aid is not the only point in common between the software and music industries. Software is subject to its own fashions and hype; it has its own stars, and its own subculture.

At one point it was even reported that Rod Cousens was to become a Pop Star! 'I was flattered — if someone wants to write a hit record for me then, if it's profitable, I'll contemplate it.' The story probably stemmed from a bizarre Quicksilva launch hosted by Radio One DJ Anne Nightingale, at which a piece of music entitled *The Game Lords* was premiered. 'I don't think my voice is that acceptable', Rod admitted.

I asked him if it was fair to compare music and game publishing. 'In certain quarters, certainly. The software industry has now taken on charts, which do have an effect on the consumer, whatever their shortcomings.' It was telling to hear him speak of the charts leading the buyers, rather than vice versa.

'The software industry is fast becoming a "hits" industry in terms of commercial attitudes', he added. 'Unfortunately, I don't think authors can ever achieve the same status that recording artists can. There are other differences. Obviously one is volume — we do not achieve the same volume as the record industry, although there was a time when it was considered that we might do so, certainly in terms of cassette sales.'

Mr Cousens dismissed the present mood of doom and despondency as 'mostly speculation — the novelty appeal has worn off, but it's still an exciting, innovative industry.' He predicted that games sales would continue to dominate the market. 'People have suggested that we ought to look more to educational software, to applications and utilities, but the sales levels software houses are seeking cannot be realised in those markets.'

ELECTRIC DREAMS

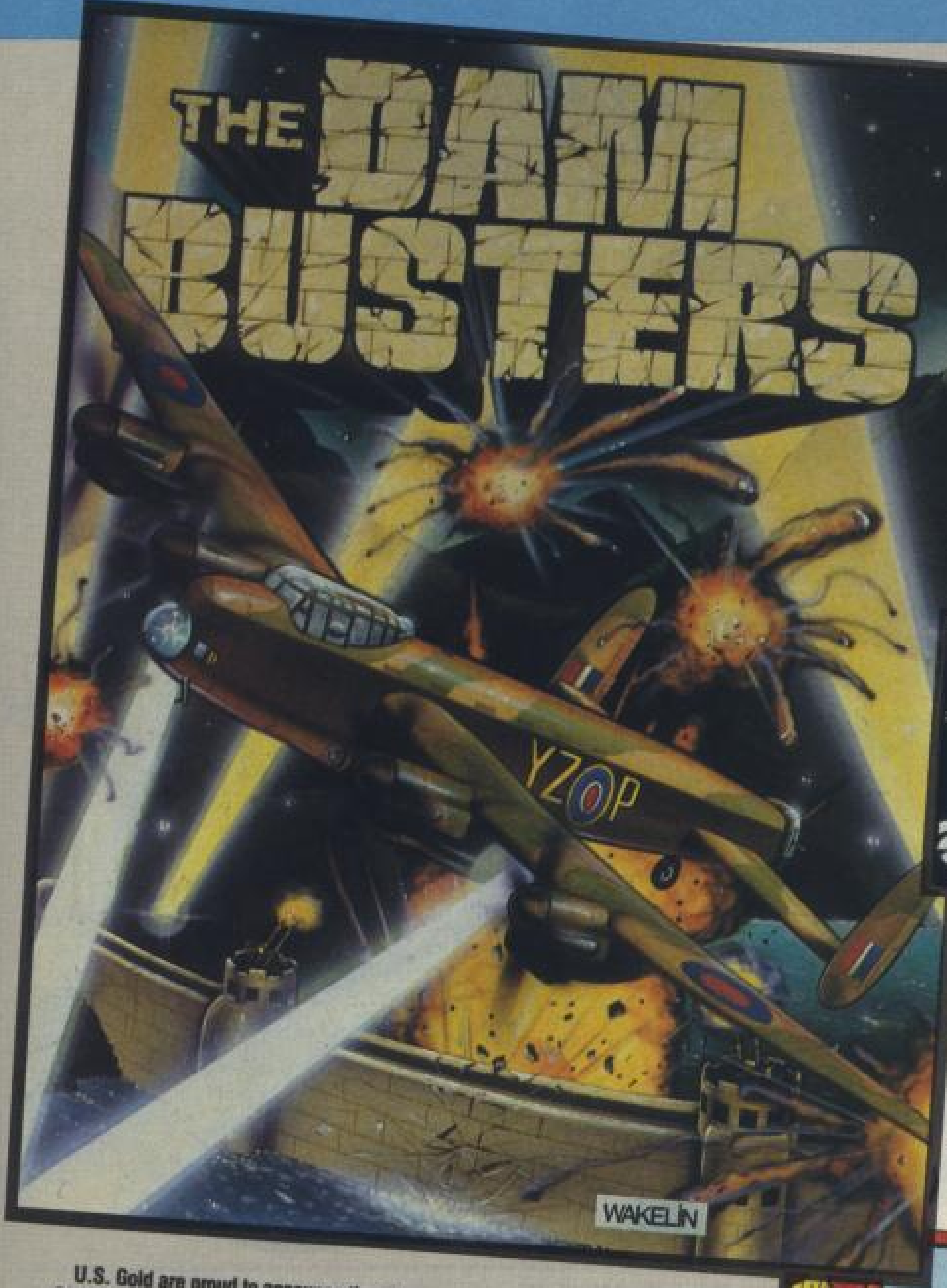
His new firm may well surface under the name **Electric Dreams** at the Personal Computer World Show this month. Programs will be chosen for release by Paul Cooper, formerly Quicksilva's Software Editor — as Rod prognosticated, Paul sat in the background, chortling his way through a copy of the August issue of CRASH. In view of his past contacts, it would hardly be surprising if a few famous names from Quicksilva made their mark on the new label. It's been twelve months since the last program from *Ant Attack* author, Sandy White, hit the streets for example. . . .

Rod Cousens is enthusiastic about the future of the software industry: he is convinced that there is as much potential variety in entertainment software as in music. Future hardware developments will make a contribution, but existing computers are far from played out. 'Pioneering programmers will come up with the next form of entertainment. We're at the tip of the iceberg as to what we may achieve in ideas and designs.'

SEPTEMBER WILL BE SPECIAL...

FOR THAT'S WHEN

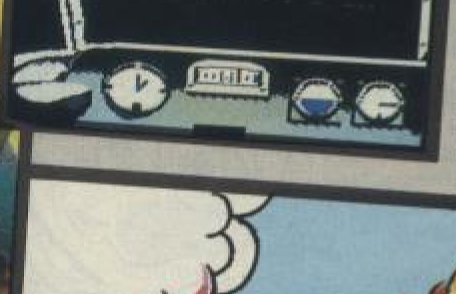
Sydney comes to the Spectrum



Already a hit on the Commodore 64, you can now relive the tension and excitement of this historic raid on the keyboard of your spectrum 48K.

You will be able to play the part of pilot, navigator, front gunner, rear gunner, bomb aimer and flight engineer. You fly across Europe at low level to avoid radar, keeping a look-out for ME110 night fighters, barrage balloons, searchlights and flak. If you survive the journey and successfully locate the target, you will still need all your nerve and skill to control the aircraft and release its deadly payload at just the right moment! Achieve your goal and you'll earn Squadron Leader's Wings. But remember – it wasn't easy then, and it isn't easy now!

- SUPERB GRAPHICS • REALISTIC JOYSTICK CONTROL
- PILOT'S SCREEN • INDICATORS • NAVIGATOR'S SCREEN
- GUNNERS' SCREENS • BOMB SIGHTING SCREENS
- ENGINEER'S DIALS • COMPREHENSIVE FLIGHT INSTRUCTIONS • MAPS
- AUTHENTIC PERIOD MATERIAL



SPECTRUM 48K VERSION AVAILABLE IN SEPTEMBER

£7·95



U.S. Gold are proud to announce the release of GROG's REVENGE for the Spectrum 48K.

This outstanding game has been available only to those lucky owners of Atari and Commodore 64 machines, but now Spectrum owners can join in the crazy adventures of Thor and Grog too!

Thor has completed his Quest for Tires. Now he must discover the Meaning of Life. But it won't be easy, the Meaning of Life is hidden away, somewhere in a long maze of mountains.

Each mountain is covered with clams and Thor needs to gather them in order to pay the tolls and advance through each mountain. But its a long hard journey; climb steep hills, dodge rocks and potholes; speed through treacherous caves. Avoid tiredactyls (they eat Thor's tires!) and the mighty Grog.

Follow the straight and narrow, cross each bridge as you come to it. Take the high road and the low road and you can learn the Meaning of Life.



SPECTRUM 48K VERSION AVAILABLE IN SEPTEMBER

£7·95

U.S. GOLD All American Software

Sydney Development Corp.

U.S. Gold Limited, Unit 10, The Parkway Industrial Centre, Heneage Street, Birmingham B7 4LY. Telephone: 021-359 3020. Telex: 337268.

ALL SCREEN SHOTS AS SEEN ON THE COMMODORE 64

Here's a bit of fun for everyone, and at the same time you can help Mikro-Gen with a few facts. . . .

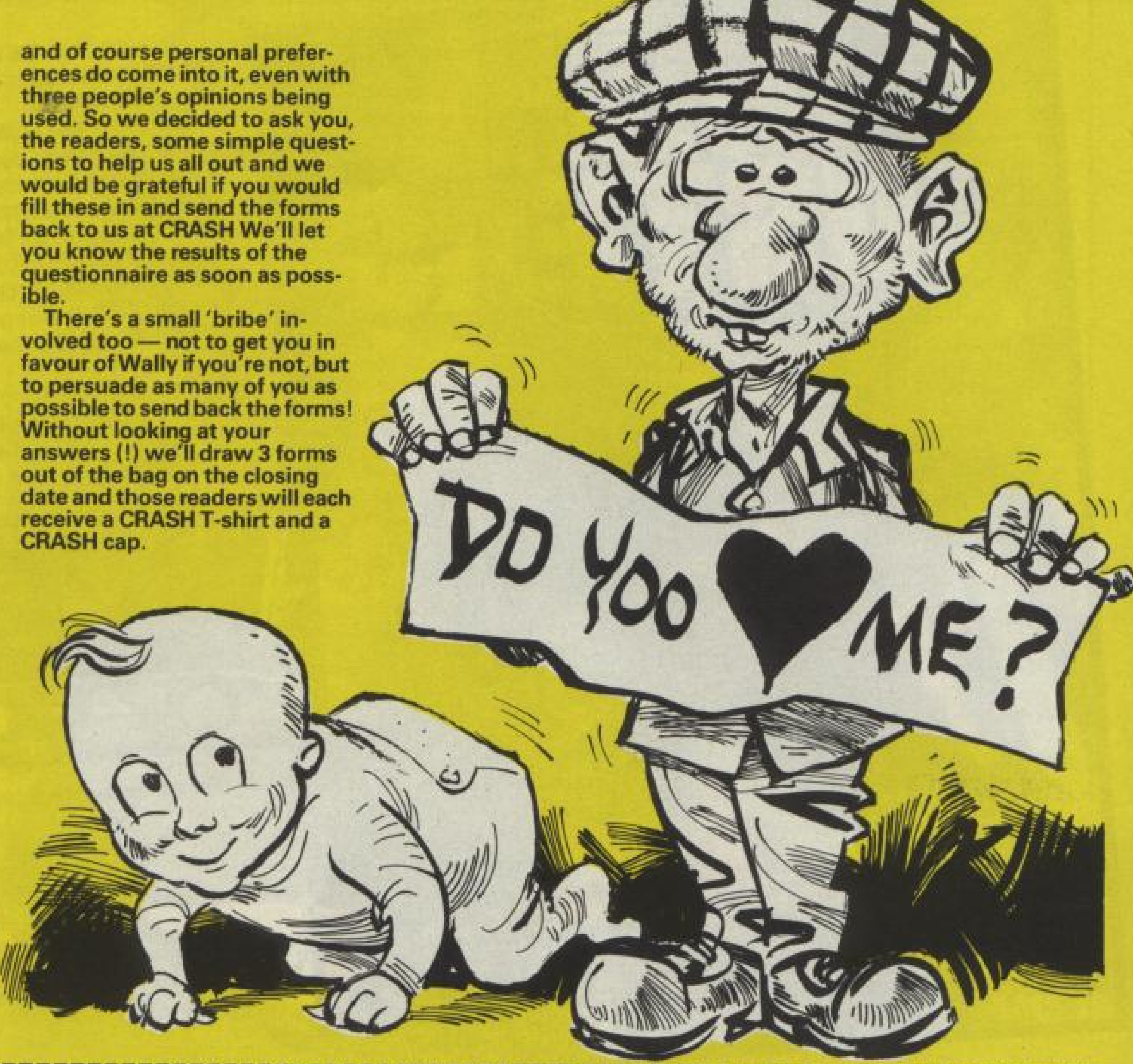
HOW MUCH OF A WALLY ARE YOU?

When Mikro-Gen released the first Wally Week game, *Automania*, they reckoned they had a good game and a useful hero, but no one reckoned with Wally spawning a whole series of games and an entire family to boot! *Pyjamarama* and *Everyone's a Wally* were huge hits and still have a massive following, the combination of cartoon graphics, multiple locations, games within games and adventure-like puzzles to solve, proved immensely popular and satisfying.

Mikro-Gen plan to expand the range of characters around Wally Week and use all sorts of different scenarios to create new games, but with *Herbert's Dummy Run* they feel they hit a snag with our sister magazine, ZZAP!'s, review. We reckoned it was a Smash, the fourth in the string, but the reviewers in ZZAP! said otherwise, and while still liking it, felt that it was too similar to the previous games to be that good.

Mikro-Gen, being a sensible company who like to know what's going on, are naturally concerned that two magazines published by the same company should say such different things about the same game (both Spectrum and 64 versions being as identical as it is possible to be). At CRASH we are also concerned at the difference between the views — and curious. Reviewers are human (believe it or not) and can make mistakes or misjudgements, and of course personal preferences do come into it, even with three people's opinions being used. So we decided to ask you, the readers, some simple questions to help us all out and we would be grateful if you would fill these in and send the forms back to us at CRASH We'll let you know the results of the questionnaire as soon as possible.

There's a small 'bribe' involved too — not to get you in favour of Wally if you're not, but to persuade as many of you as possible to send back the forms! Without looking at your answers (!) we'll draw 3 forms out of the bag on the closing date and those readers will each receive a CRASH T-shirt and a CRASH cap.



Please tick or delete when appropriate

1. Which of the games do you own?

Automania
Pyjamarama
Everyone's a Wally
Herbert's Dummy Run
None of them

2. Generally, do you think the Wally Week games are

Excellent / good / average / poor / terrible?

3. How do you rate the 4 games out of 10?

Automania
Pyjamarama
Everyone's a Wally
Herbert's Dummy Run

4. Do you think the Wally Week 'formula' is getting . . .

better each game /
much the same /
getting stale?

5. How much are you looking forward to the next 'Wally' game . . .

a lot / moderately /
not at all?

6. Do you think each of 'the gang' should have their 'own' game as Herbert has done?

yes / no

7. Do you think the puzzles to be solved should be . . .

easier /
harder *or* more of them /
less of them?

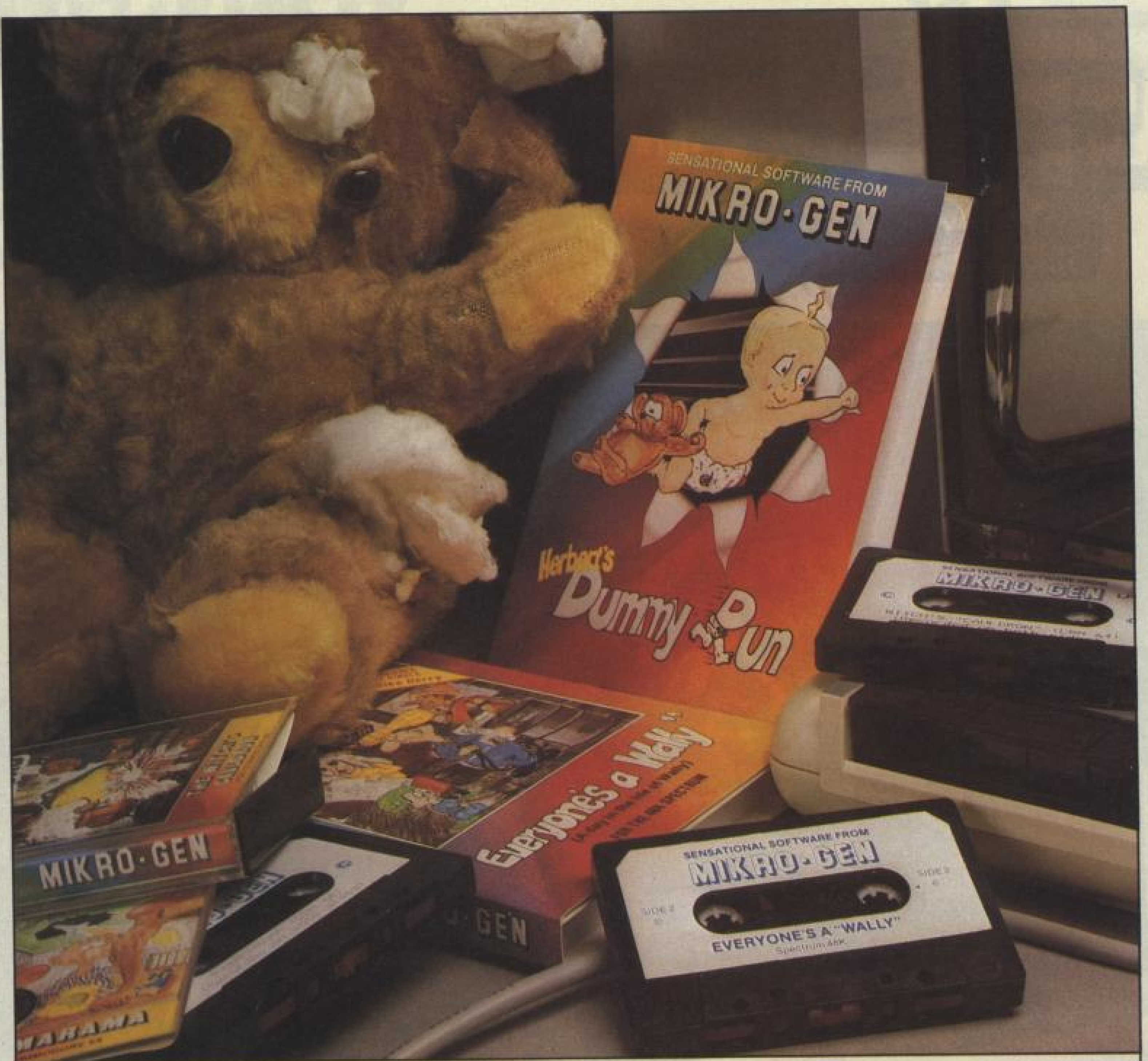
8. Are there any ideas you would like to see incorporated into the games that you haven't seen yet?

Name . . . .
Address . . . .
. . . .
. . . . **Postcode** . . . .
Age . . . . . .
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A





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ANT ATTACK

The first game in 3D Softsolid, a programming technique devised by Scottish sculptor Sandy White, Ant Attack's graphics are still stunning. A non sexist game, you can be a hero or heroine, attempting to rescue people from the ant infested city.

B

FANTASTIC VOYAGE

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Two days before the official 'on sale' date, EMAP Business & Computer Publications gained an injunction to prevent distribution of the August issue of CRASH on grounds that there was a breach of Sinclair User magazine's copyright in four pages, which it contained.

Those pages were 123 to 126. Newsfield Publications was forced to comply with the injunction and recall all unsold copies from the retailers in order to have the four offending pages removed before redistribution could take place. This was duly done, but in the process it was inevitable that some copies should be lost and the issue go on re-sale late.

If you missed out, and now have a gap in your collection, sorry. But don't despair. We have stocks of trimmed copies, which lack the offending four pages (and come with a special sticker on the front cover) ready and waiting in CRASH Towers. If you want to complete your collection, catch up on the Smashes you missed, obtain the pull out poster specially painted for you by Oli, or merely feel a little empty as a result of a CRASHless August, now's you chance to catch up on the August CRASH Experience. Even after its last minute diet, issue 19 is still 126 pages fat, and comes packed with reviews, profiles and tips 'n hints on gameplay. How can you resist the opportunity to catch up on what you missed?

If you want any other back issues at the same time, it'd be best to use the back issues coupon at the foot of the backnumbers advertisement. But if Issue 19 is all you want — rush off the coupon below together with a cheque or postal order for 95p plus 5p post and packing — a total of £1. and we'll rush you a cut-down copy under plain cover. Well plainish — in the standard CRASH bag, magazines for the sending off in.

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METABOLIS

Producer: Gremlin Graphics
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Chris Kerry**

Metabolis features a rather fierce and brave bird, both on the loading screen and on the inlay. The character within the game is a creature of different stuff, it's something more akin to a little Finch, all sweet and cuddly.

The story has it that the invading Kremins have transformed the human race into a variety of little creatures. You have been turned into a man brained bird (from a bird brained man?) by these evil aliens. It is your duty to destroy these evil beings. First of all you must recover a serum that will restore you to your natural self, find the wizard who will cure your heart, weakened by the transformation, and then destroy the Kremins. The destruction of these despicable beings can only be brought on by a nuclear explosion — so find nuclear fuel pods, take them to the reactor room and run/fly like hell.

The game area consists of a highly complex maze, about 150 screens large. As you fly around the maze you meet a variety of different creatures most of whom are pretty harmless. Some, like the starfish will kill on contact. If you have an encounter with a Kremin your energy will be sapped so it's best to stay out of reach: that calls for some agility. Beware of the many traps, like the one ton weight which will flatten, but not kill you. Your heart is a constant source of trouble and you will die unless you can keep yourself topped up with the angina pills. As your energy is sapped by the evil invaders a picture of a little bird gradually turns into a skeleton as you weaken. To reverse the trend you must find food and grow fat again. A little red heart will begin to flash when the strain is becoming too much — hurry and find some more pills before it's too late. Don't despair it's not all bad news, you do have a weapon — a boomerang — if you can find it.

CRITICISM

● **'This is a very original game. I found it very entertaining and addictive. The movement of the character takes a little getting used to. Unfortunately the sound is not very good — it could have been a lot better. The graphics are well up to the Gremlin standard, as smooth as ever. Maze and mapping freaks shouldn't pass this over.'**

● *'The animation of the main character is fantastic: when he flies it's just great. Somewhere in the maze you will come across a one ton weight. If the birdbloke gets hit by it he gets flattened and has to walk around with a very odd shaped body, until he later fills out, but he still manages a grin meantime. There is a wealth of original design in this game, and some of the areas are very attractive indeed. A highly addictive game that promises to be a lot of fun.'*

● 'I have been a little slow to appreciate this game. At first sight it looked very ordinary. It wasn't long before I realised what a lovely game this is. The bird is superb, the rooms within the maze are fantastic, one genuinely can't wait to see what's round the next corner. *Metabolis* should provide hours of fun for the cartographers. This isn't going to be an easy game to solve, mostly because it's all too easy to make a mistake but, having said that, it is pure fun with only a touch of frustration. My only disappointment was with the sound. Search this one out.'

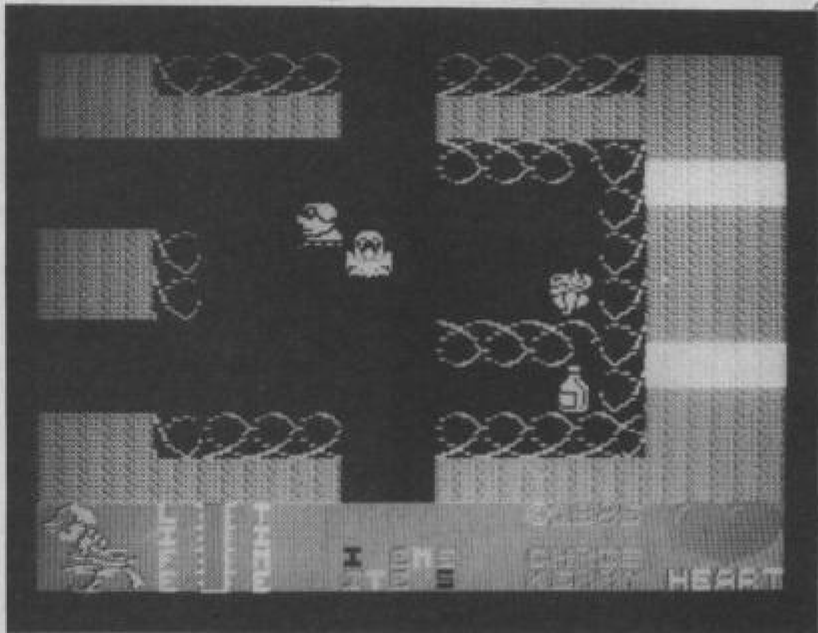
COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right, O for up and K to fire
Joystick: Kempston or Sinclair
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: wide and varied, carefully used
Graphics: not state of the art, but very attractive
Sound: poor
Skill levels: one
Lives: one, but can be extended
Screens: 150
General rating: an excellent all round game, great fun to explore

Use of computer	70%
Graphics	86%
Playability	90%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	91%
Value for money	87%
Overall	**87%**







The bird-man of METABOLIS, as he appears on the loading screen, and during gameplay. Icarus? Schmicarus! This boy's wings aren't stuck on with wax!

CODE NAME MAT II

Producer: Domark
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£8.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Derek Brewster**

It's well over a year since we all got excited by Micromega's *Code Name Mat*, a 3D polar graphics game that was virtually state-of-the-art at the time and was penned by none other than our very own Derek (who wasn't our very own at the time).

In this new game, once again, the survival of Earth depends on you, Mat, the intrepid and fearless space fighter. Again, you are alone in a sophisticated ship, Centaurian II, with two weapons systems, plasma bolts (slower) and lasers (faster). Unlike *CNM* there is no supporting home fleet to think about. Your task is to make sure that the network of 24 satellites which provides power to the all important Karillium mines on Vesta are not destroyed by the enemy Myon forces, leaving Earth to starve.

The power network consists of four power lines, each containing six satellites. Using unmanned craft, the Myons attack the satellites attempting to break all four power lines by destroying at least one satellite in each line. You must hold them off for as long as you can — the longer you hold them off the more Karillium will be mined. The trick is to make sure that at least one line is always kept open, either by moving undamaged satellites into the position of the dead ones or by repairing the partially damaged satellites.

Centaurian II has a number of systems; SAFETY prevents you melting your weapons and stops you going into hyperspace without any shields. An energy bar indicates the state of the batteries (which are kept topped up by the engines, so long as they aren't damaged). The screen on the left has a number of functions. It's a battle computer, rear view screen, long and short range scanner, and a quad scanner which will tell you where the enemy is and how many satellites have been damaged. On the battle computer you'll see the enemy's range, and all you have to do is to manoeuvre the ship so the blob appears in the centre. The Target computer automatically selects the nearest enemy ship. After a fight, a damage report is given and the computer also directs repair droids to fix any damaged system, during which time the system will be shut down.

Out in space though, learning Myon tactics is important. The first couple of waves tend to

home in on you. Between each wave there is some time to repair damage inflicted on your ship or the satellites. Then after the first two attacks, the following ones are directed at the satellites and that means a lot of warping back and forth.

Good luck Mat, we at CRASH are counting on you.

CRITICISM

● '*Code Name Mat II* **is another strategy space shoot em up. Although there is a mass of instructions supplied with the game, a quick read should be enough to put you in the picture. After all, by now we should all be familiar with the concepts of short and long range scanner, battle computers and damage reports. This game has all of that and a little bit more. Of course the drawback is having to memorise all of the buttons needed to make the various functions spring to life, but the keen will soon learn. The graphics are adequate but not good enough to make the game brilliant. A long way above average.'**

● *'This is a pretty complicated game and it took me quite some time to master the controls. On the whole my effort was well rewarded.* Code Name Mat II *has all the right ingredients. It needs arcade skills to defeat the enemy in combat, and strategic skills to frustrate the enemy's aims. Above all it requires a sense of adventure to begin in the first place. The game brings to life some very complex interactions, and it all becomes very absorbing — especially when you check for damage and notice that the battle computer and the short range scanner are on the blink making you virtually blind. Great, if this sort of game interests you then you must not pass it by.'*

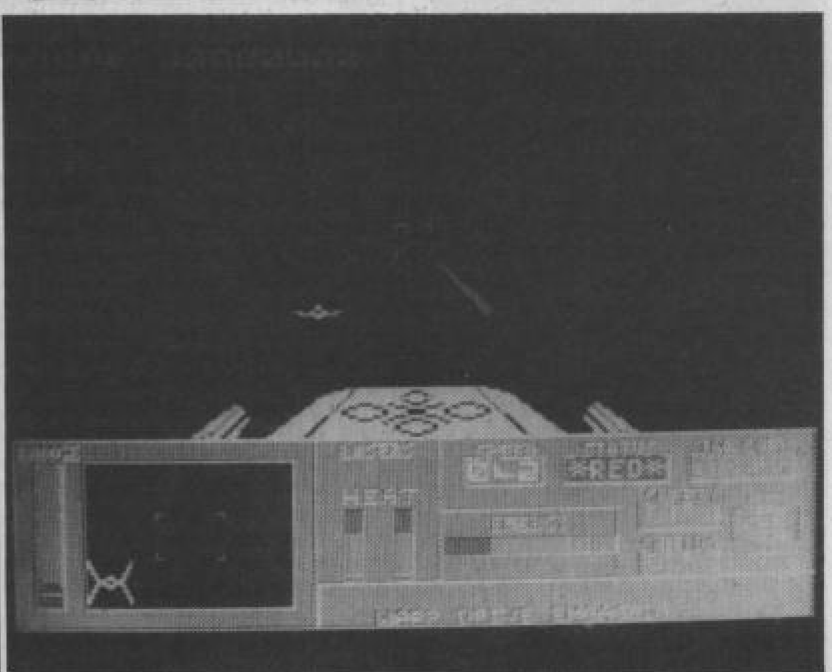
● 'I never actually saw "MAT 1" so when I came across this one I hadn't a clue how to play it. The instructions were a bit muddled so they didn't help playing much. I'm sure I would have got the hang of playing with all the keys after a while but for some time I was totally lost. The graphics are nothing too special although there were a few nice touches here and there. There was a definite lack of sound in this game which is a shame as it might have made it a little more playable, but I doubt it. Generally I wouldn't play this game a lot as it is a little too involved for me to handle, even though it is quite addictive.

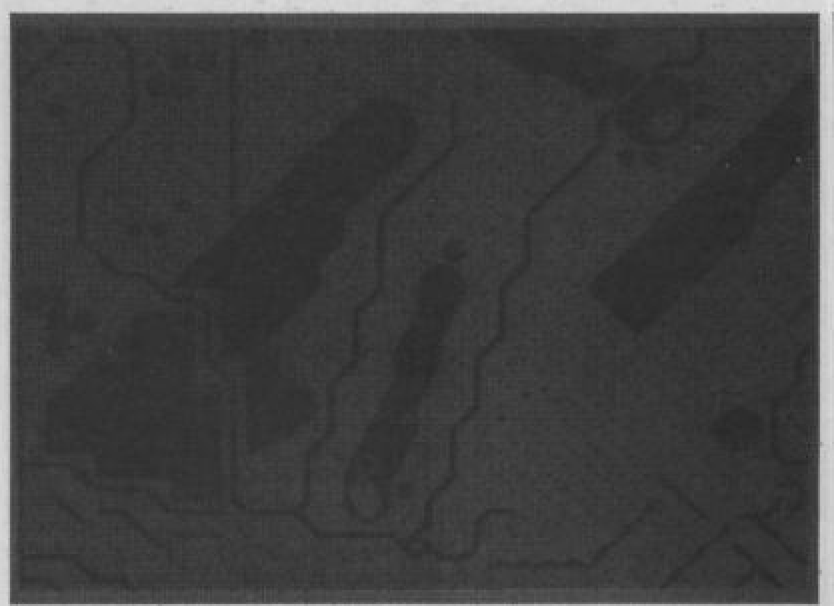
COMMENTS

Control keys: 6/7/8/9/0 for left/right/up/down/fire, 1/2/3 for decelerate/accelerate/stop, 4/5 for cruising speed (30%)/full speed. There are 14 other vital controls
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Cursor
Keyboard play: complicated and often fiddly
Use of colour: good
Graphics: very effective
Sound: limited
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1
General rating: a fast 3D tactical space game felt to be well above average to good.

Use of computer	**78%**
Graphics	**81%**
Playability	**80%**
Getting started	**70%**
Addictive qualities	**83%**
Value for money	**75%**
Overall	**81%**

CODENAME MAT 2, created by our very own Adventure Reviewer for your delectation and entertainment. Remember what they taught you in Space School.





Part of the course in NICK FALDO PLAYS THE OPEN. Someone once said that the game of golf is a pleasant walk ruined by having to hit a little white ball with a stick. There's no need to walk in this icon driven simulation, and it's not three bad either.

NICK FALDO'S OPEN

Producer: Argus Press Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Mind Games and Concept Software**

Golf certainly seems to be gaining in popularity these days, at least in the silicon if not actually on the green. *Nick Faldo Plays The Open* is based entirely on the Royal St. Georges golf course, where the famous annual Open Championship was hosted for the tenth time this century a few weeks ago. This simulation brings you all the hazards of this very difficult 18 hole golf course, and comes with a guide to the St. Georges course giving a detailed map of each hole, together with hints and tips (but no pokes).

One of the drawbacks with golf games has always been telling the computer just what it is that you want to do. This game tackles that problem with icons. The screen is split into two: the upper half gives a bird's eye view of your ball's position on the course, while the lower half is divided up into seven more sections, four of which allow you to input information.

Once you've selected the hole you want to play, you are told the distance between the hole and the tee, the par for that hole, the number of strokes you've played on that hole, and the total number of shots taken for the contest so far.

Underneath the hole number there are two white triangles, one pointing up the other pointing down. To select a hole number, move the little hand over a triangle: pressing the fire button increments or decrements the hole number, depending on which triangle you've selected. The strength bar indicates the amount of thump you intend to give the ball, and this is adjusted the same way. Selecting the angle of shot is equally as cunning — you move a little ball around the perimeter of the circle. When you play the stroke, the ball will fly off in the direction given by the imaginary line drawn through the centre of the circle and the ball on its perimeter.

Selecting a club is simply a matter of moving the list of available clubs until the one you want appears in the window. Before you make your shot you might just like to check where the hole is in relation to the tee, and this can be done by moving the hand over the map change icon. The map remains visible while you hold down fire. A moving bar graph indicates wind strength, while wind direction is shown by an arrow.

When you've decided how to play your shot, moving the cursor over to the little picture in the bottom centre initiates play. The plump chap on the left is your caddie, and you are the fellow in plus fours. Press fire and a speech bubble appears from the golfer specifying the required club. The caddie replies 'OK' unless he thinks you are making a mistake, in which case he asks 'are you sure'. Either rethink the matter or say 'yes' by pressing the fire button again.

The caddie will then turn and pass you the club of your choice. Your golfer then goes through the swing and and makes the shot — at this point you can

make final adjustments to your shot using the joystick.

Although the caddie appears a nice chap, he's quick to make snide remarks after you finally manage to put the ball away after only 253 shots. All that's missing is a 'bash the caddie on the head' icon.

CRITICISM

● **'*The Open* endorsed by Nick Faldo is of course a golf game, no wait! this one is different and is a significant improvement on most golf games. For a start the graphics are colourful, smooth and fairly detailed. The course is shown well on the map. The icons make setting up a shot a doddle and your stroke can be 'fine tuned' with a joystick. The best golf game to date, but with a bit of a price draw back.'**

● *'This is a very fine golf simulation. Being anything but a golf fan I quite enjoyed this game in its own right. The icons are a pleasure to use. My only reservations concern the ball. In most cases it's pretty easy to follow but every now and then you have to study the screen very hard indeed to find where the ball has got to. I dare say that most golfers spend a great deal of time looking for their balls so perhaps this adds to the realism. However, this should not be the case when it comes to the putting green, where clash caused by the ball and the pole obscures the ball's position, making that all important putt nearly impossible. On the whole this is a great simulation and suitable for non golfers.*

● 'I've always enjoyed golf, both the real game and as a computer simulation. The Spectrum has been rich in such games, some of them quite good, but no one has yet provided us with such a fluent, enjoyable or realistic simulation as this one. Even non-golf loving players might find *Nick Faldo* a source of fun. For the first time, I feel playing skill has really been allowed to have a direct effect on the way the game develops. And by using icons, club selection, angle and strength of hit becomes the natural thing it should be rather than the more usual tedium of countless button hitting. This is an excellent simulation and well worth investigating.'

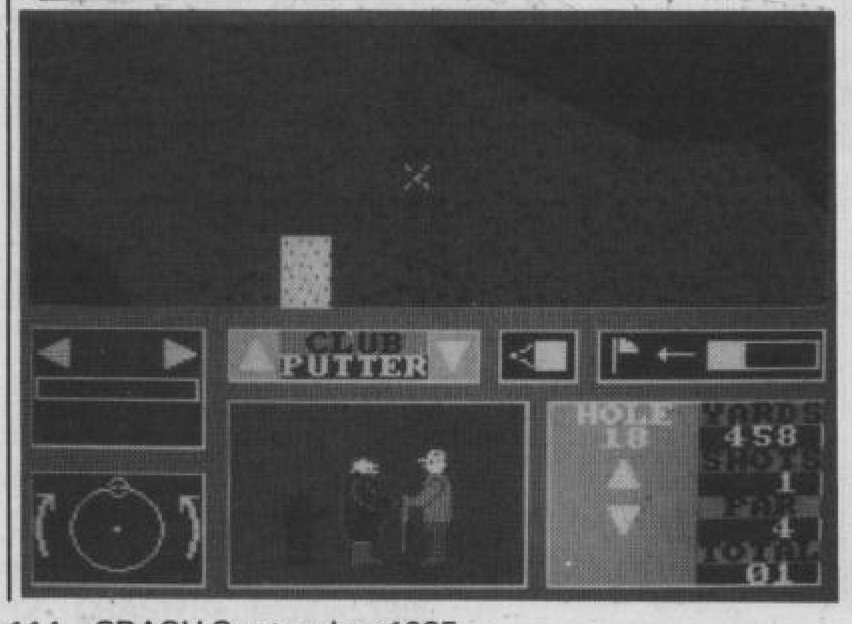


COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: very good
Use of colour: average
Graphics: clever
Sound: hardly any
Skill levels: one
Lives: N/A
Screens: N/A
General rating: the best golf simulation yet

Use of computer	**85%**
Graphics	**75%**
Playability	**79%**
Getting started	**89%**
Addictive qualities	**76%**
Value for money	**69%**
Overall	**83%**

What a corpulent chappie your caddie is! Must have trained in the Jeremy Spencer School of Eating. A polite exchange of club takes place during NICK FALDO PLAYS THE OPEN.



RED ARROWS

Producer: Database Software
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£8.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Database Publications**

There is now quite a good selection of flight simulators available for the Spectrum, all of varying quality. Most of them require you to take off, have a bit of a saunter about — perhaps over some mountains — and then make your way home before you run out of gas. *Red Arrows* is very much a flight simulator, but your main task is to fly with the Red Arrows, performing complex and difficult formation displays.

The Red Arrows perform a large range of manoeuvres during their displays and this game lets you run through four of the formations in their repertoire with them. One further option allows you to go out on a solo flight which gives you the opportunity to familiarise yourself with both the aircraft's controls and its response.

A training mode allows you to fly any of the five options, and offers guidance via instructions displayed at the top of the screen which help you keep up with the rest of the formation. If you find it too difficult to cope with all of the controls, the computer can be told to take care of the steering or the thrust, but you score is adjusted accordingly when you 'cheat'. The ultimate aim of the game is to learn to fly well enough to be able to take part in any of the displays unaided — then you score according to your performance.

From your cockpit you can see the other team members. (Well, those directly in front and slightly to port and starboard of you anyway.) More often that not, this means you get to see a great deal of other aircraft's exhaust ports which can be unnerving. The cockpit instruments are pretty standard and include brake, flap and undercarriage indicators. The all important thrust bar is alongside the panel housing the altitude, rate of ascent and velocity indicators. The other large panel is unique to this particular game since it gives a picture of the shape of the current display formation, with your position indicated by a flashing dot. The same display can also show the pattern of the current manoeuver.

Two further panels show the degree of roll and angle of climb or descent that your aircraft is experiencing. During the display instructions from Red One will scroll along the bottom line of the screen. It's here that you find out what the next formation is and, more importantly, exactly when you must change to it. If you find yourself out on a limb or over another airfield you can return to the formation by pressing a single key but the cost is the loss of your score up to that point.

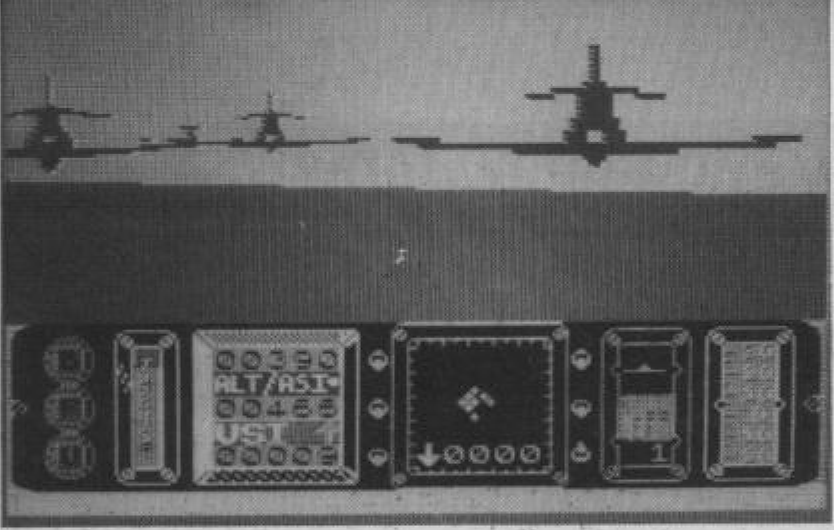
With the manual that comes with the game there are details of a competition in which you can win a weekend with the Red Arrows, and who knows, if you get good enough at this game them perhaps they might let you fill in for one of the pilots.

CRITICISM

● **'I think the idea of a flight simulator based around the antics of what must the World's most renowned display team is a very sound idea indeed. The trouble with a lot of simulators is that they simply don't give you enough to do (I do not include Digital Integration's *Fighter Pilot* in that class). Sadly, I have to conclude that, on the whole, I am not very impressed with this game. I'm sure that the package could have been put together a lot better. The graphics are pretty bad. The background is either blue or green, and there are no landmarks on the ground even during take off. You are given no indication, apart from the instruments, that you are really moving. The view of the other aircraft is quite good except, when one of them breaks the boundary between Earth and Sky (blue and green), it appears to disintegrate. My last complaint concerns the speed at which the program works. It took me fifty one seconds to do a complete barrel roll. At a speed of 200 Knots that meant I travelled nearly four miles — not a very tight performance to say the least. The speed is perhaps the greatest let down. Without that fast reaction and high degree of manoeuvrability for which the Hawk is famed, this game may as well be based around a microlight display team. Generally disappointing.'**

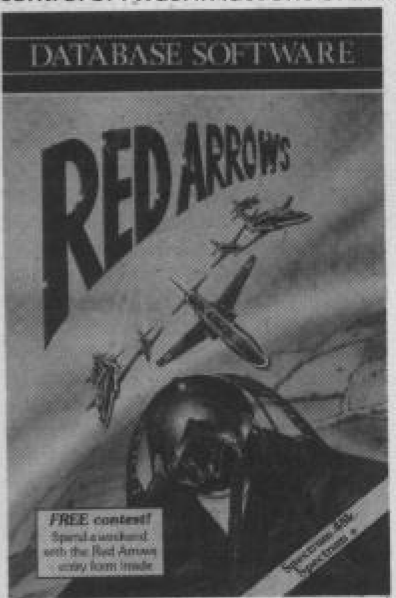
● *'I am not very keen on flight simulators. I find them far too annoying and drawn out.* The Red Arrows *is no exception. However its saving grace is the idea around which it is designed, and at least when you're up in the sky you are kept very busy indeed. Flying in a formation is very difficult, and performing all sorts of aerial stunts makes the task almost impossible. I found the aircraft very difficult to handle, mostly because it responded so badly. I dare say the flight simulator freaks may have a little fun with this but I would rather leave it alone.'*

● 'The idea behind this game is quite a good one, but there was



The rear view of three (or is it four) Red Arrows, in Database's game of the same name. RED ARROWS that is. Bet they don't have 'Caution — Show Dogs in Transit' stickers in THEIR rear windows. . . .

very little to hold my interest. When 'flying' solo you are faced by a green and blue screen with a few boring dials, and even flying with the Red Arrows, the only additions are some red shapes that could be planes if your imagination was good enough. The actual play is slow and uninteresting — when I first started I found it difficult to tell whether the computer was in control or I was. In fact one of the most entertaining bits is watching the little man come down with his parachute after a crash. I am sorry that this latest offering from Database is not as polished or as valuable as their last program, *Mini Office*.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: works best with Kempston
Keyboard play: complex and slow
Use of colour: limited to three
Graphics: could be a lot better
Sound: none
Skill levels: three
Lives: one
Screens: N/A
General rating: a great deal more could have been made of the idea

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	62%
Playability	48%
Getting started	68%
Addictive qualities	50%
Value for money	39%
Overall	52%

TALOS

Producer: Silversoft
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **unknown**

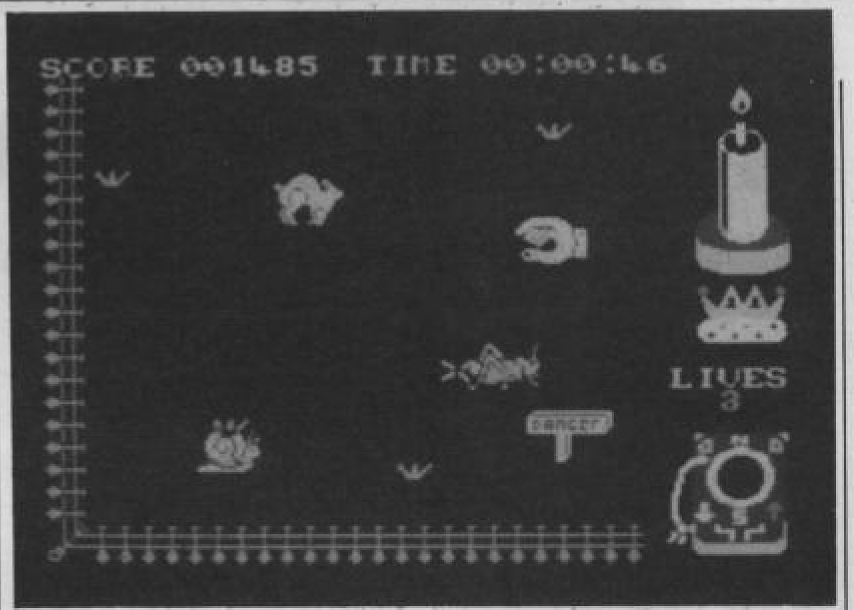
Having just been careless enough to loose their Crown of Eternity, the battle weary English are now looking for a hero, to recover the crown from the impenetrable vault in which it has been locked. You play the role of Talos, the battle robot. However, even after Talos has been found the English have still got to find the rest of him. Confused? then read on.

At the moment Talos is nothing more than a gleaming brass hand that was once part of an equally gleaming battle robot that had a very bad day and ended up scattered across the countryside. To be exact, poor old Talos has been broken into seven pieces which are spread over an area of some 200 screens. You are the hand and must go forth and find the rest of



you, so you can become great again and strut your stuff on the crown rescuing front. It's important that you find the bits in the correct order — after all there's little point in finding a leg unless you have a body to hang it from.

Once Talos is complete the next task is to find and enter the vault. Recover the Crown and who knows . . . perhaps you will



get a good rub down with Brasso from the grateful citizens.

Of course, there are a number of complications that make the rebuilding task onerous. First, most of the natural wildlife has a pretty bad effect on Talos, draining his energy which is measured by the shrinking candle on the right of the screen. Some energy is gained by picking up certain types of objects — the money bags always seem to do Talos a power of good. Most of the time he is able to avoid the wildlife or fend it off by liberal use of electric charges. The bull is a little bit more of a problem: that's immune to Talos' defence system so the best advice is stay well clear.

During your tour round the maze you will come across a wide variety of other hazards, not least being the pools. More often that not a bit of Talos can be found at the bottom of some deep pool and, since a brass hand isn't exactly cut out for swimming, you'll have to find a way of getting the bits out. Should you find a bit that you can't actually fit to the body, never fear, you can drop a magnet at the place and a compass underneath the candle will help guide you back to the spot when the time is right.

About half of the maze is barred by a series of white gates. The gates remain in place, and the secrets that lie behind them stay hidden until Talos finds and recovers a white pearl. When all the gates are open you can fully expect to be given the opportunity to behave like the hero you are expected to be . . . and maybe you'll get that rubdown as a reward!

CRITICISM

● **'I found this to be a very annoying game, mostly because it is so hard to stay alive for a reasonable period of time. The graphics and sound are so Silversoft it's uncanny. Without a doubt this is a very straightforward maze game, and so long as you keep your wits about you, you shouldn't find it too difficult. Having said that, there are some pleasant surprises in store for the player, although it's really just a matter of patience and stamina.'**

● *'Talos is a sort of maze game. To be honest, I really find it hard to say much more than that. I liked the way the various forms of wildlife appeared from the blue, and, graphically there are some rather pleasing effects. The worms are great. The ponds are really strange and very well done — in many respects they are the best part of the game. Even though making progress in the maze is determined to some extent by the objects you manage to pick up (the white pearl which gets you past the white gates is a prime example) the game isn't that complicated. This is far from a maze adventure but nevertheless it poses quite a stiff challenge.'*

● 'This game manages to incorporate some fairly good ideas, like the magnets, but there is still a lot missing. The graphics are quite well done and nearly always entertaining, but neither feature justifies the very high price tag the game has been given. However, I did have quite a lot of fun playing *Talos* so I feel safe in declaring it to be above average.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/X left/right, K/M up down; P to fire and A to drop magnet.
Joystick: cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: good
Graphics: average
Sound: nothing special
Skill levels: one
Lives: initially three, more lives can be awarded
Screens: 200
General rating: not a very exciting development.

Use of computer	61%
Graphics	60%
Playability	72%
Getting started	74%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	49%
Overall	60%

WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS

A COMPETITION MINION'S HOLIDAY . . .

Hah! Fooled you. No such thing.

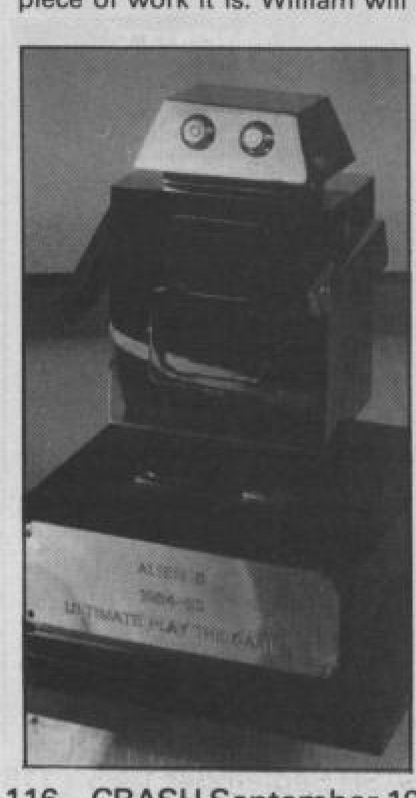
SINCLAIR POCKET TV COMP

Well, some of you read your **Sinclair Story** very closely indeed, and some of you didn't. The first three people whose forms were all correct according to our judge's opinion had obviously studied their CRASH back issues before posting off their competition entries. Three winners of a **Sinclair Pocket TV** will have their prizipoos winging off to them soon. They are:
Gary Currier, from Kings Norton in Birmingham
Mrs Middleton, from Sheffield
John Kerslake, from Bath.

ALIEN 8 MAPPERS

Not a bad crop of maplets for this one — and our new rule discouraged the more ambitious cartographers amongst you from sending in maps that could easily pass for rolls of carpet. There's only so much space in the CRASH Towers Map Room you know, and I have to have my lunch in there too. . . .

David Western and Oli Frey put their heads together up in ART, judged the maps and came up with **William Overton** as the overall winner. His map forms the basis of the *Alien 8* Map which you should find on pages 62 and 63 in this issue, so you can see for yourself what a neat piece of work it is. William will soon have his own Doohickey to keep on the mantlepiece, polish and generally be proud of.



I know we said there'd be five consolation prizes of CRASH T Shirts to a handful of runners up — but David, in a rare kind-hearted moment, thought there should be six. A special mensch goes to Dave Gough, who obviously ran out of time but was well on the way to producing a beautifully drawn map which he sent to us in an unfinished state.

The five mainstream runners-up and Dave will soon receive a form from Auntie Aggie in Mail Order, requesting their T Shirt sizes — and we'll be sending maps back to people who included return postage very soon. Runners up were: Jim Gillon of Colchester, Damon Butler of Shipley, Jonathan Peel of Huddersfield and John Kilby of Luton as well as the two-man team of John Dicks and Simon Slater. Well done chaps.

July CRASH Quiz Winners

A newsagent's lot is not a happy one, especially when you lot descend demanding copies of the latest issue of the magazine. Our Spot The Difference on that very theme provided Hilary Brown of Cowes, Glenn Farrow of Plympton, Devon and Neil Love from Telford with the opportunity to pick up sofware of their choice to the value of £25 **and** a CRASH T Shirt.

Three more Quizzers will have a T Shirt, but sadly no software. They are: P Simpson of Shrewton, T Donelly of Bedford and K Bilbey who lives near Kings Lynn. Aggie Babes will be in touch with all six of you soon — and maybe will have been super efficient and written to you while this was being printed.

ICON DRIVEN RESULTS. .

With Oli's help, we were able to bring you an icon-driven competition for *Shadowfire* in the July issue. The only thing Oli left out of the cartoon strip was the Ludlow Space Port Warden — and if he was a direct descendant of the 20th century version, it's probably as well. You can get had up for drawing frightening pictures, you know. . . .

Enough of the speculation, however. Here's the list of winners. Signed copies of *Shadowfire* and T Shirts on their way folks.

Gorgenyi Balars Budapest HUNGARY; P Barratt, Queen St, Rotherham S65 2SR; H.M Brookes, Northwich, CW9 8PF; S Cooksey, Lizard Plymouth, PL6 6HB; H Davies, Omar Rd, CV2 5JX; G Davies, St Issells Ave, SA61 1JX; M Evans, Holcombe Rd, B11 3PR; G Farrow, Cherry Park, PL7 3PF; C Groves, Eastway, YO11 3LS; S Houston, Guywood Lane, SK6 4AN; P Jenkins, Lonisa, CF4 GEE; Scott Jones, Green How Park, LS29 7LZ; Chris Lewis, Oakhill Road, KT212JG; S Mc Laven, Highfield Road West, NG2 6DR; T O'Malley, Riverdale Court, M9 3HW; K Pridmore, Saffrondale, Yorkshire; Paul Shannon,5 Moyola Park, BT36 8ER; L Singleton, Windmill Rise, DE55 4LH; K Smith, Wythes Lane, PE21 9RY; Mark Spencer, Coalbrooks Ave, S13 9XR; S Stephenson, Heugh Road, NE66 3TJ; Paul Stevenson, Honeybourne, CM23 4EF; L Stock, Brederodestraat 91, Zandvoort, Holland; N Talbott, All Saints Rd, B61 OAG; K Walthall, Lawrence St, DE3 8TT.



ON THE RUN COMP

What a task we set you! And how well you responded. By your humble minion's reckoning, the total number of words sent in for the Des-Des word-making competition, as added together by Lloyd's abacus, exceeded TWO MILLION! Eeek. I wonder how many biros that comes to?

Anyway, outright winner by a fairly clear margin was Ian Buttle, who described himself as a 'devoted, if somewhat eye-strained CRASH reader' in his covering letter. Expect the **Design Design** loonies to be in touch with you soon, bearing a table top Pac Man machine.

And, of course, not forgetting the runners up, who each receive a copy of *On the Run* for the Spectrum. Well done all. (Well maybe all, bar the three wallies who sent in entries containing Nine Words!)

David Al-Daini, Green Lane, CV3 6EB; Colm Andrew, Besthill Cottages, Hyde; Derrick Austin, Calf Close, YO3 8NS; Nicholas Barnes, Semley House, SW1W 9QJ; K Bates, Hawkridge Gardens, NG3 1LJ; David Bates, Willow Road, B91 1UE; Alan Bennett, Benham Hill, RG13 3HL; K Bostok, Highfield Drive, CH7 2AL; Ian Bowater, Stokesay Close, B69 1XG; Philip Brewer, Little Sutton Lane, B75 6SW; Amanda Browne, Bassenhally Road, PE7 1RN; Jason Busby, Greenwood Drive, E4 9HL; C Campbell, Greenwood Drive, G81 2RE; M Clayton, Riverside Park, LS21 2RW; Ross Colquhoun, Monzievaird Crieff, PH7 4JR; Simon Da Silva, Shepherd Maze, LU7 8BD; Raymond Dovey, Warren Road, LO9 1XB; J Durrant, Westwood Avenue, NR33 9RL; Richard Earl, Holyoake Avenue, WF17 7HB; David Edwards, Riverdale Court, M9 3HW; John Firth, Ritchie Road, BA22 8SH; Daniel Foxman, Minster Road, NW2 3SH; Robert Graham, Rotherwick Road, NW11 7DG; David Greenwood, Fieldhead Ave, BL8 2LX; D A Gunn, Farm Way, KT4 8RZ; Chris Hawkins, Blenheim Road, LN4 4TX; Jamie Hodgkiss, Cumberland Road, WV14 6LT; Mike Hollins, Cruttenden Road, SK2 7NB; Elloit Jenkins, Station Road, NG34 0RB; Matthew Johns, Lyndhurst Road, BN3 6FD; Billy Kennedy, Wansbeck St, M32 8PZ; Jonathan Leach, Barton Paddocks, EX10 0AD; G R Mansfield, George Street, HU16 5QP; Les Marwick, Needwood Road, MK41 0PL; Fergus McCann, Sycamore Road, IRELAND; G D Neville, St Paulswood Hill, BR5 2SZ; Manual Puro, Everett Road, M20 9DZ; A Schofield, Springbank, TN3 8AN; A & D Seymour, Tywarnhayle Road, TR6 0DX; Paul Sheppard, Alstone Lane, GL51 8JA; J Singh, Manor Road, Shropshire; David Smith, Sherwood Avenue, AL4 9PH; Simon Taylor, Bramshaw Rise, KT3 5JU; Giles Taylor, Hartlebury Way, GL52 6YB; Jason Underhill, Foxgrove Avenue, BR3 2BA; Harvey Walsh, Helena Street; Walters, Windley Crescent, DE3 1BZ; James Ward, Keates Est, N16 7AD; Alex Watkinson, Linkwood Crescent, G15 7ER; Andrew Wigman, Amethyst Road, BH23 3EA.

BIFF! BANG! WALLOP!

The results of the FRANK BRUNO Boxing competition from the July Issue, plus some tips on playing the game . . .

HA! At last your humble competition minion succeeds in winning a small editorial spot for himself in the magazine. Not only have I been allowed to print some winning artist's creations, but also I have been given the opportunity to upstage that POKE fiend Robin Candy by printing a few tips and hints on how to fight your way to the top in *Frank Bruno* without cheating!

First off, you have to enter the ring against the **Canadian Crusher**. He's a fairly easy match, to get you started off — as long as you remember the great lummock hasn't got that many brain cells. With some quick feinting you can land lots of punches home, fair and square. If you aim a blow to his (its?) head, up comes Crusher's guard. Get a body blow in quick — he'll then drop his guard, so go, go, go, biff his head.

He's a gorilla all round, with a haymaker of a right uppercut — a nasty clout if it hits home, but you can anticipate it and take evasive action very effectively with a bit of practice. Monkey Man will try and crush you in a bear hug whenever you knock him down — so be ready to duck. . . .

Fast and furious, is **Fling Long Chop** your next opponent. A neat mover this chap, who sproings all round the shop dodging your blows to the head and blocking rather well. Not the easy target offered by old Crusher, Fling needs to be overcome with a veritable barrage of blows. Keep biffing at him, and you'll start to get some goodies home.

Fling's only tricky manoeuver is his head kick — something to do with his martial arts training, one supposes. When this Oriental 'Orror is about to kick your ear, he goes down onto his left knee. See him do that, duck quick and he's unlikely to inflict much damage to your cranium.

A bit of a nutter, is **Andra Puncheredov**, quite literally. Watch his head, and if you see it going back he's about to drop the nut with all the panache of Yosser Hughes. Duck quick, or you'll be in the soup.

When it comes to sticking one on him, you've got to be pretty quick. The calibre of opponent is improving dramatically at this stage on your journey towards the title, and Andra's good. You're going to start getting hurt from here on in, kiddo. You can give him a hard time by throwing right jabs at him like a maniac — he'll dodge most of them. Keep the pressure on, and look out for the moment when he tries get out of the rain of blows you're pouring down by dodging to the right. Get a left head punch in the moment he dodges, and you should start to get the upper hand.

Anyway, that's enough tiplets to get started — on with the results. Who knows, if you write your Minion a bit of fan mail, he might get some space next issue to pass on some more Bruno **tips . . . anyway. On with the results.**

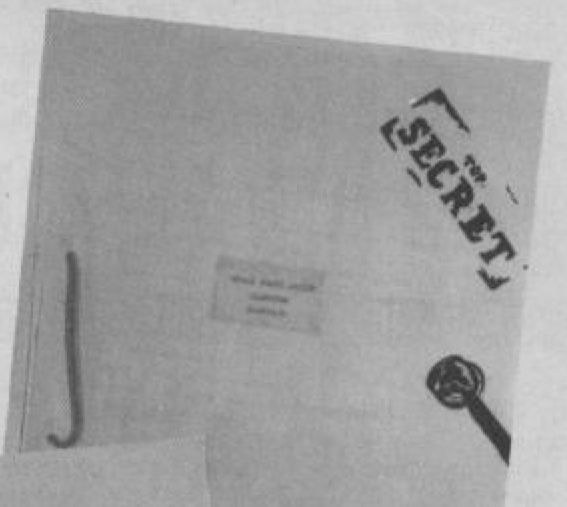
Outright champion in the comp is Alan Mears, of Hood Court, NN17 2RH who produced not just a picture, but a complete dossier on his fighter 'Babyface' which included press clippings, the lot. Well done Alan, you will have a modem, a copy of the game and a specially engraved trophy. Stephen Graham, of Green Lane CA2 7QB and Fraser Watson, Whirlowdale Road, S11 9NH came second equal, as they used to say in your Minion's school reports (I was a bright lad you know). Fraser's 'Punchbag' was striking a blow for the liberation of punchbags throughout the world, and the sentiments touched my minion-heart! Neatly done. And 'The Lean, Green, Fighting Machine' in the form of 'Ollie Octopus' from Steve Graham was just so cute . . . VTX 5000 modems and a copy of the game for you two, an' all.

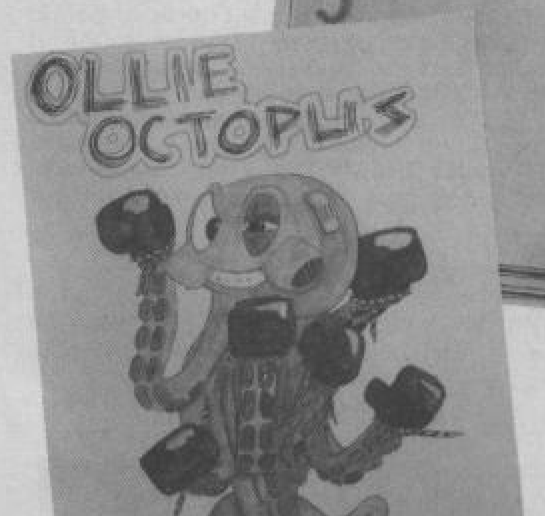
The volume and standard of entries was so good for this competition, it was a very hard task indeed whittling down the entries to winners, but after burning a couple of gallons of Midnight Oil, we managed to do it. Here's the list of runners-up, who all win a copy of ***Frank Bruno's Boxing.***

Andrew Sandham, Stirling Farm, AB3 4HQ; Neil Vaughan, Alcester Road South, B14 6AA; S Sarkar, Wellington Road, London E11; G Stonnell, Hawk Close, MK45 1RX; Joe Rebbeck, Highfield Road, BD9 4HZ; Ronnie Fowles, Liney Street, M15 5AN; Sarah Rymill, Oakengrove Close, HP15 6SN; Ian Harris, Gainsborough Drive, WV6 7NR; Miss D Willis, Cinnamon Lane, WA2 0BD; A E Hall, Highlands Ave, LA13 0AU; Richard Merry, Glendale Crescent, KA7 3RZ; Richard Langford, Larmans Road, EN3 6QW; Chi Chow, St Benets Road, SS2 6LF; J Singh, Manor Road, TF1 4PN; Bryan Scott, Beech Grove, NE9 7RD; Stephen Delo, Spindle Glade, ME14 5RQ; Simon Bottrell, Wimblington Road, PE15 9QW; Ian Wheeler, Wellington Street, PO5 4HT; Michael Whaite, High Heyes Farm, Chorley; A & D Seymour, Tywarnhayle Road, TR6 0DX; Thomas Lennon, Kingstanding Road, B44 8LB; David Lewis, Whitebeam Road, B37 7PF.

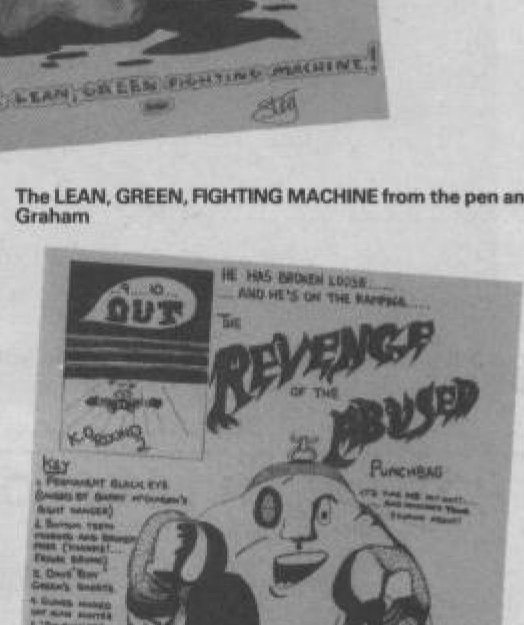
HONOURABLE MENTION
And the office softie, Sally Newman, was so taken by James Crawford's drawing of a boxer that she insisted we give him an, HHONOURABLE MENTION. (That's all!)

A complete dossier on the Mafia's favourite fighter was supplied by Alan Mears. BABYFACE — dontaya beat him, or we send da boys round. . . .





The LEAN, GREEN, FIGHTING MACHINE from the pen and brush of Steve Graham



The PUNCHBAG Strikes Back. Neat idea, nicely executed by Fraser Watson



ATTENTION! CHANGES IN VOTING FOR THE CRASH CHARTS

PHONE-IN HOTLINE DISCONTINUED

Voting for the CRASH Hotline and Adventure Chart can no longer be done by phone — too many rude phone calls upset the neighbours!

But don't despair, you can still cast your vote for the two CRASH charts, so long as you do it by post and use the coupons below (or a photocopy). Each month we'll still be drawing five lucky prize-winners out of the Hotline Vote Bag, and five more winners will come out of the Adventure Chart Cask. First coupon out for both charts wins £40 of software and a CRASH T-Shirt with four runners up from each sack of mail collecting a T-Shirt and a super dooper CRASH Hat.

HOTLINE VOTING - Your Favourite Five

It's as simple as ABC(DE)! All you have to do is list your favourite five programs, in descending order, next to the little numbers on the coupon and whizz it off to us.

ADVENTURE CHART VOTING

After much deliberation, we've decided to limit the number of games you can vote for on the Adventure Chart to five. No longer can you keep on voting for as many games as you like (or can think of). It's five adventure games only now, folks. You still need to give each game you vote for a mark out of ten, however, so we can apply a cunningly derived mathematical formula to everyone's votes and come up with the final ranking. Quite simple really, for you if not for us.

DON'T FORGET

The telephone number for the Hotline Phone-In has been discontinued, so don't waste your time and money trying to ring in Hotline or Adventure Chart votes. Postal votes only chaps and chappesses, on the coupons to PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB. If you want to save money you can pop the coupons in the same envelope as your competition entries — so long as you mark it MULTIPLE ENTRY.

Get Voting. . . .

ADVENTURE CHART WRITE-IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

postcode

Send your coupon to: **CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five programs are:

TITLE	VOTE OUT OF TEN
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

CRASH HOTLINE WRITE IN COUPON

Please use block capitals and write clearly!

Name ....

Address ....

....

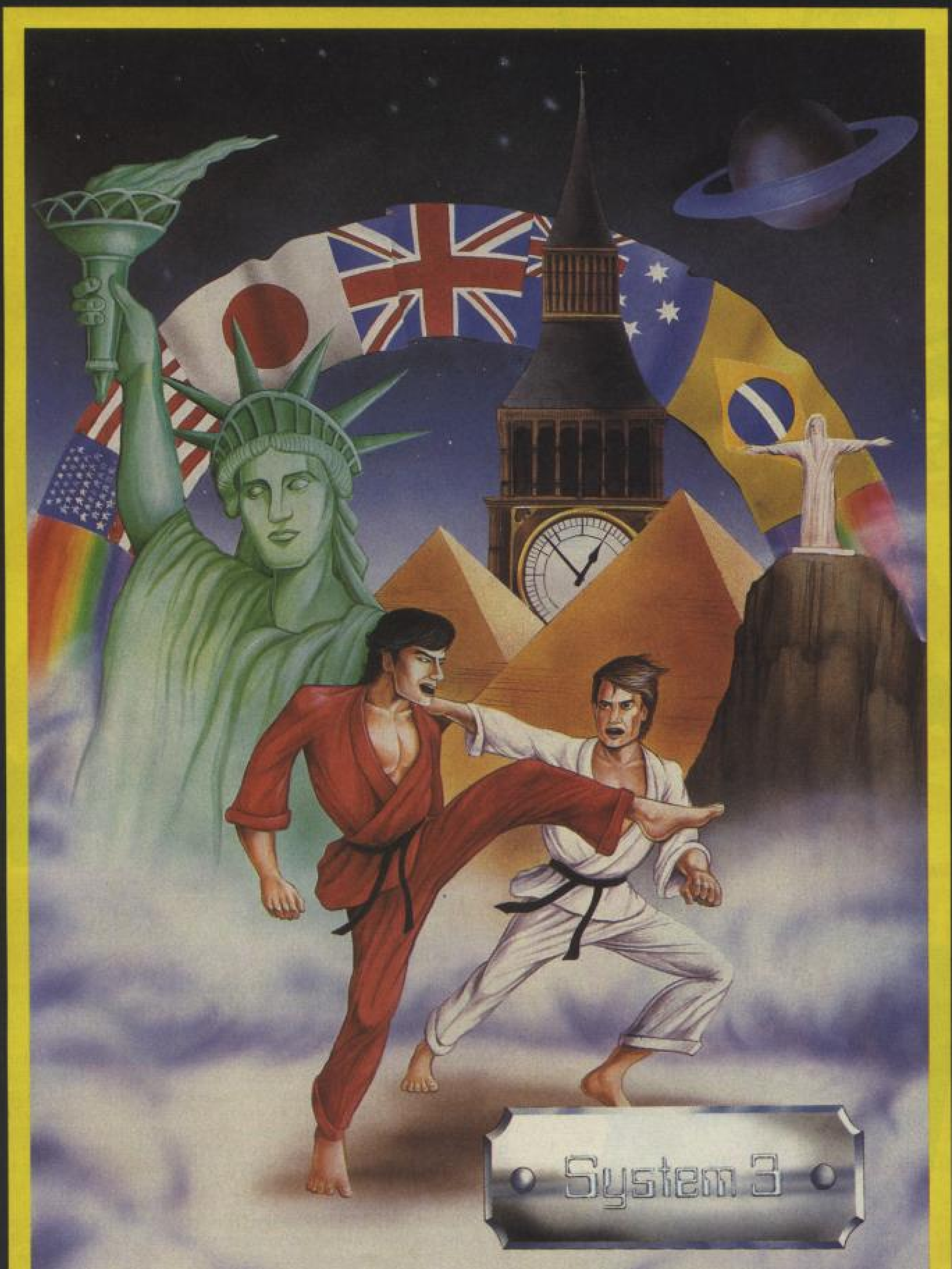
Postcode ....

Send your coupon to: **CRASH HOTLINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB**

My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

INTERNATIONAL KARATE



..And you thought you'd seen a Karate game

As you know, like the Martial Arts, Perfection is the only accepted standard, so play nothing until you play — SYSTEM 3's — INTERNATIONAL KARATE

For the Spectrum, C.64, Amstrad and all 48k Ataris at ONLY

£6.50

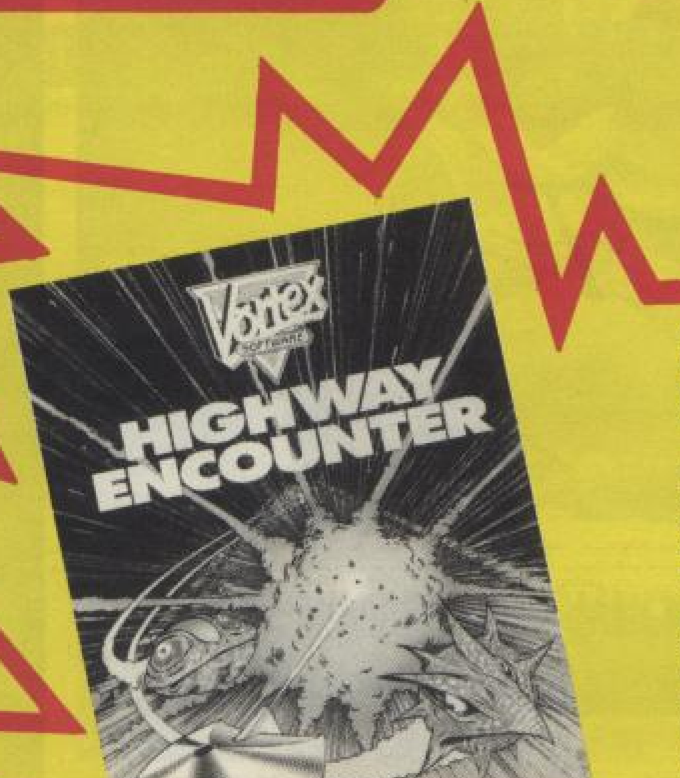
SYSTEM 3 SOFTWARE. SOUTHBANK HOUSE, BLACK PRINCE ROAD. LONDON SE1 TEL: 01-735 8171. Ex. 68

DANGER! LOW
LASER BOLTS!
TAKE C
DRO







You should by now have read our review of the excellent new game from **Vortex** which stars a team of droids — or Vortons — who trundle down a very mean street indeed, shoving an explosive device ahead of them. A CRASH Smash, no less.

In the game, you have to control the lead droid, whose job it is to clear the road ahead of hazards so his chums can follow through without coming to grief. But what of the unwary motorist, who might wish to take his 2.3 children out for a Sunday drive down this perilous pathway? How could he cope with the extra hazards posed by piles of boxes and barrels, mobile mines, low-flying hairy laser bolts and beetling robots?

Well the simple answer, judging by the scenes we see out of the CRASH office windows of a Sunday is he couldn't (yes, they make us work on Sundays too you know . . . none of this civilised perusing of the papers followed by a quick listen to the Omnibus edition of *The Archers* enjoyed by minions on the London computer magazines on a Sunday for **us** lot you know). As we slave away, manic motorists zoom up and down Ludlow's well-signposted one way streets, in carefree abandon as the local traffic warden has Sundays off.

Talking about traffic wardens, our Ludlow man is a right loonie. Threatened to biff the illustrious Kean the other day as we sweaty minions attempted to unload five thousand magazines from the back of a lorry. The fellow's quite touched, by all accounts — something to do with the lack of sun or something, but every time we try and unload magazines, up he storms, throwing wobblies all over the place. (The Yellow Band traffic warden that is, not Roger 'The Illustrious' Kean.) P'raps we should suggest that King Street should be the scene of *Highway Encounter Two* to the boys at Vortex. Failing that, we could try and knock up our very own Yellow-seeking guided missile system for unloading days.

But enough of this aimless wittering, on with the competition.

FLYING

ARE - ELDERLY

IDS CROSSING

Vortex Software Crash Competition







Win one of three VTX5000 modems in the VORTEX design-a-sign competition . . .

To help the hypothetical motorist trying to make his way down the Highway in Vortex's game, we'd like you to draw up four road signs to warn him of the impending dangers. We've provided a couple of examples of the more traditional warning signs to be found by the side of conventional roads, and what we want you to do is sketch out four signs for the following hazards which might be Encountered on the Highway:

1) *Beware — low flying laser bolts*

2) *Mobile Mines Ahead*

3) *Trundling Vorton crossing*

4) *Danger! Piles of barrels*

And just for fun, how about drawing a fifth sign for us to pin up inside our office front door, to remind us of the dangers of unloading magazines? We could glance at it every time we go out to do the job. Something along the lines of:

5) *Watch out Minions — Loonie Traffic Warden approaching!*

Get your thinking caps on, sharpen you pencils, crayons, paintbrushes or felt tips and come up with five example signs as detailed above. Judging will take place on 26th September, and the three best entries, on the basis of the ideas and execution will win their very own VTX5000 modem, courtesy of Vortex, which will enable them to get their Spectrum talking to the world. Twenty two runners up will also be in receipt of a bulging Vortex Goodie-Bag.

Entries please, to WATCH THAT TRAFFIC WARDEN, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.

A CRASH Smash

H•I•G•H•W•A•Y E•N•C•O•U•N•T•E•R

HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER

Producer: Vortex
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Costa Panayi**

It's been a long time since we have received anything from this well known and widely acclaimed author; his 3D graphics are both distinctive and cleverly applied.

Highway Encounter has a simple plot. You control a droid or Vorton, which has the simple task of taking an explosive device from one end of a straight road to the enemy base at the other. If the device is successfully delivered then the enemy advance will be halted and you will have won. You view the action from an oblique aerial angle, seeing one complete section of road at a time. In all you have a total of five droids under your command, but you can only directly control one at any given time. The remaining droids are automatically programmed to push the device down the centre of the road until they meet an obstruction whereupon they come to a dead stop.

The control droid is steered in a similar way to the robot in *Alien 8*. To move in a given direction you must first rotate until the droid is facing the appropriate way and then move forward. This is a difficult system to come to terms with: the droid reacts as if subject to inertia, and it takes some time to accelerate to full speed and seemingly even longer to come to a halt.

At first sight the game looks very simple — so long as the road ahead is clear the explosive device and automatic droids will make their way down the middle of the road. They will only stop if their path is blocked, as it frequently will be. Most of the blockages are caused by large barrels and boxes left lying around but very soon you realise that although these objects are a pain they can in fact be put to very good use. You see, the enemy aren't just sitting back waiting for you and your bomb to turn up on their doorstep . . . they have some pretty smart defence systems waiting for you. The first type take the form of stationary mines, if you collide with one then you lose a droid and will have to take over one of the automatic ones. The mobile mines are a bit more of a problem, they slide back and forth across the width of the road and while you can dodge them with the controlled droid, the only way of ensuring a safe passage for the rest of your party is to block the mines in against the wall with boxes or barrels.

Generally the controlled droid can nudge objects along the road, but it is often quicker to manoeuver them into place by firing laser bolts at them. Sometimes more than one object can be moved at a time, but the whole operation becomes a lot slower. Beware of the objects that look like boxes but in fact melt when fired at. The laser fires in bolts of three blasts, each blast sending out a sort of hairy bullet thingy which hits home with devastating effect. However, after firing a burst of three bolts the laser pauses briefly to re-charge and this can be a bit of a problem when it comes to dealing with the third type of defence system — the enemy's droids.

The enemy machines come in all shapes and sizes, and some just seem to wander about while others actively hunt for you. They vary in the way they move, while some droids are prepared to try a frontal assault and are easy to take care of, others sneak up on you while their allies draw your fire. Clearing a path along the highway becomes progressively more difficult. To start with, you find it fairly easy to move items around to block the mines off, later on, not only do the mines appear in larger groups, but they move more erratically and your attempts to trap them will be hampered by ever increasing numbers of nasties attacking you.

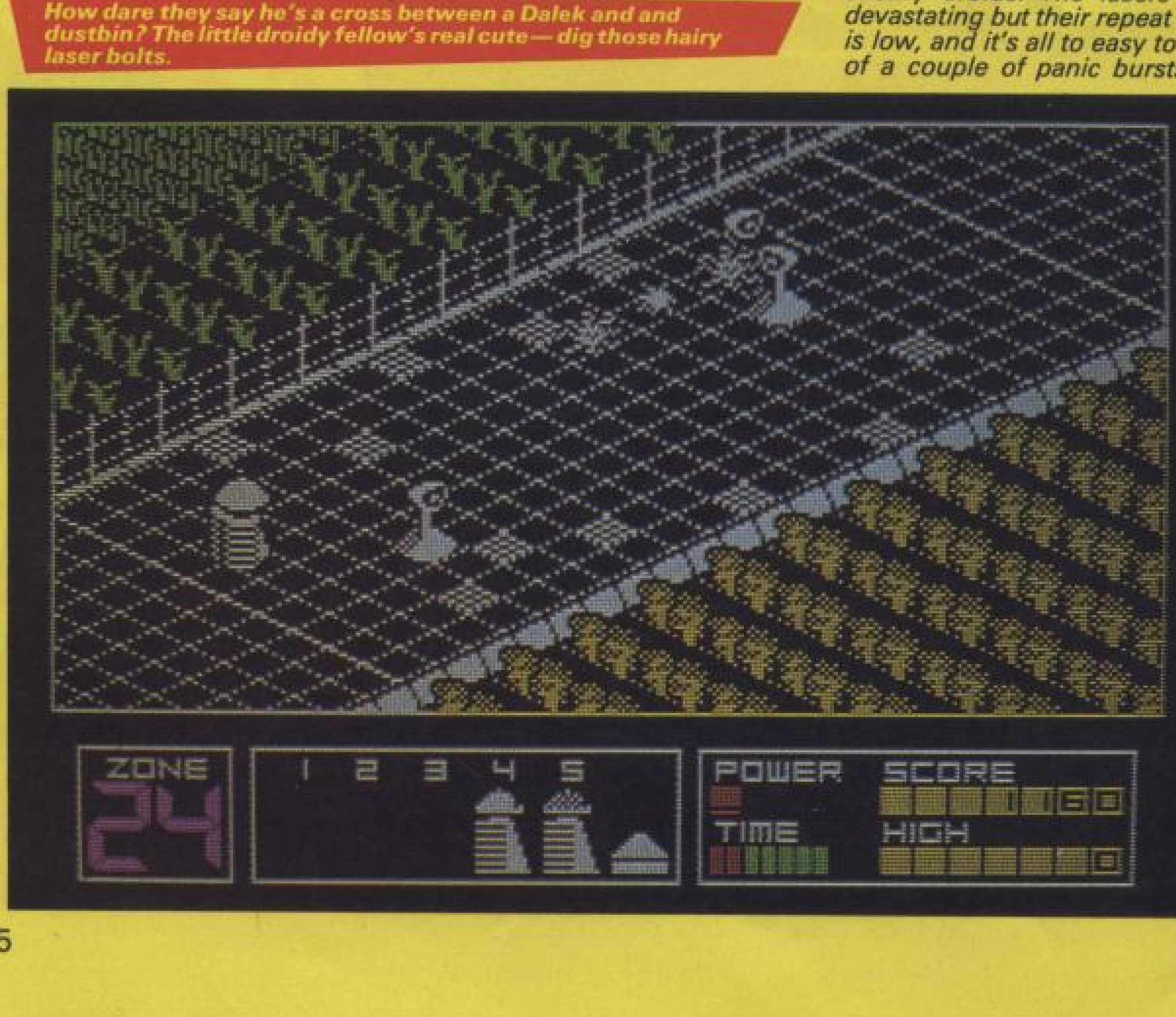
To make matters worse the game has a time limit for completion. The amount of time remaining is shown by a bar graph on the lower part of the screen. Within the same area you are told how many droid Vortons you have left and which of the 30 zones you are in. Points are awarded according to how many droids have reached which zone. The more droids you have surviving and the nearer the end of the road they are, the more points you will score.

CRITICISM

● **'I knew it, for all these years the Daleks have been given bad press. *Highway Encounter* gives them a chance to save a World (actually they are Vortons, but they look something like a cross between a Dalek and a dustbin, and yes, I have heard the joke). The game boasts excellent 3D graphics — Ultimate-type both in design and quality. This is a very playable and highly addictive game. I loved the introduction as well.'**

● *'I am very impressed by this highly original and excellently designed game. The idea of having to chunter a bunch of droids down a road may sound a little boring, but wait until you try. Clearing the way through calls for a bit of thought but most of all you had better have a steady nerve when you meet the enemy droids. The lasers are devastating but their repeat rate is low, and it's all to easy to fire of a couple of panic bursts to*

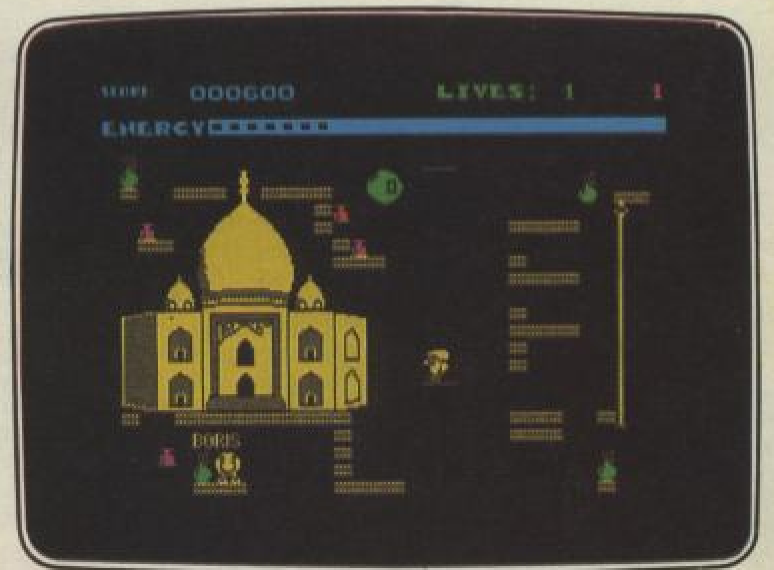
How dare they say he's a cross between a Dalek and and dustbin? The little droidy fellow's real cute — dig those hairy laser bolts.



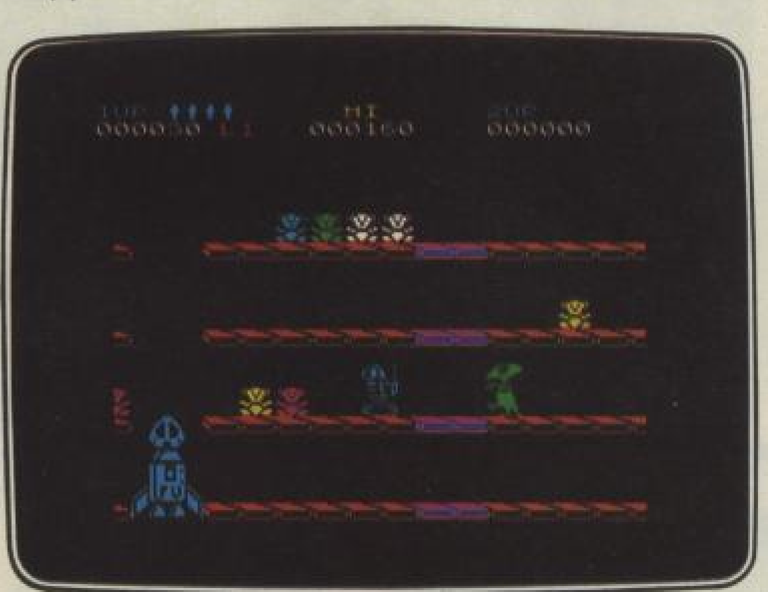
SILVER RANGE... Seeing is believing



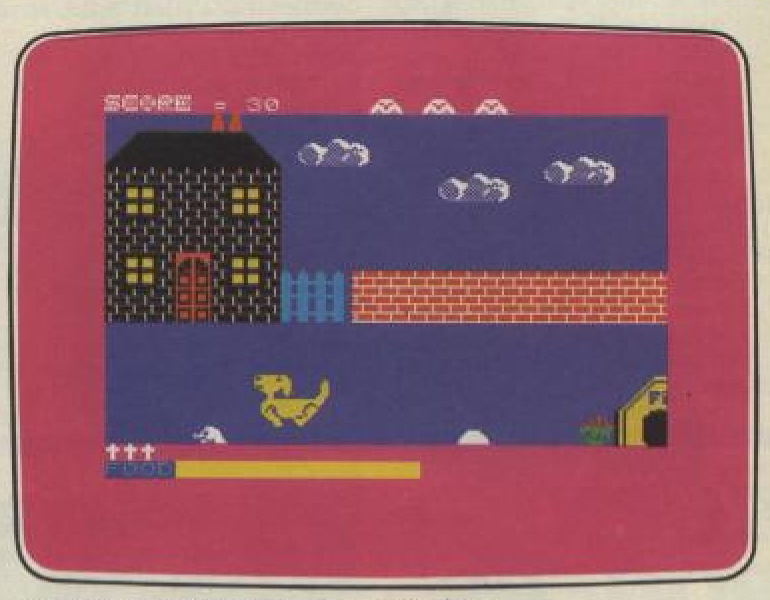
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find yourself with an 'empty' gun when it comes to killing the nasty bearing down on you. Time and time again I found myself looking for strategic spots from which to fire, some sort of cover so I could only be attacked from one direction and thus forcing the enemy into a 'killing zone'. This is a superb game, the gameplay is fast and thrilling, the graphics quick smooth and detailed; absorbing? Blotting paper doesn't even come near.'

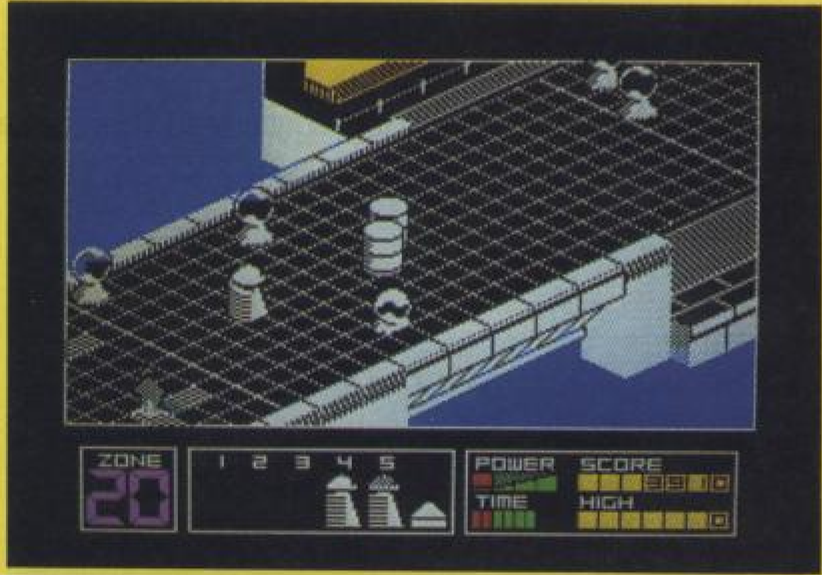
● 'This has to be one of the best games of the year. It has 3D graphics which would make Ultimate's hair stand on end. The clarity of the graphics was surprising — with most other 3D graphics I tend to get a bit 'lost' in them, and my eyes start playing tricks on me after a while. None of these things happened to me while I was playing this one. All the characters are very well drawn and nicely animated. There are many different types of nasty, some of which move in a set pattern, and on those screens you have to devise a routine which will get you and your 'Lazertron' across safely. When you're up against aliens which move around erratically it is best to blast hell out of them. I really enjoyed playing *Highway Encounter* but unfortunately I think it will be easy to complete in a short amount of time and I will probably get bored with it then.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1/Q accelerate/decelerate, o/p left/right, space to fire
Joystick: Interface Two, Kempston and Protek
Keyboard play: very fast, probably better than using a joystick
Use of colour: road and objects in black and white but nice use of colour for the roadside graphics
Graphics: brilliant
Sound: some very nice effects
Skill levels: one
Lives: five
Screens: 30 and a surprise!
General rating: magic

Use of computer	85%
Graphics	96%
Playability	95%
Getting started	93%
Addictive qualities	96%
Value for money	84%
Overall	95%

Tote that box, heave that barrel, pen up the nasties and let the good guys get down the road. Droid fun in HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER, beautifully projected in 3D.



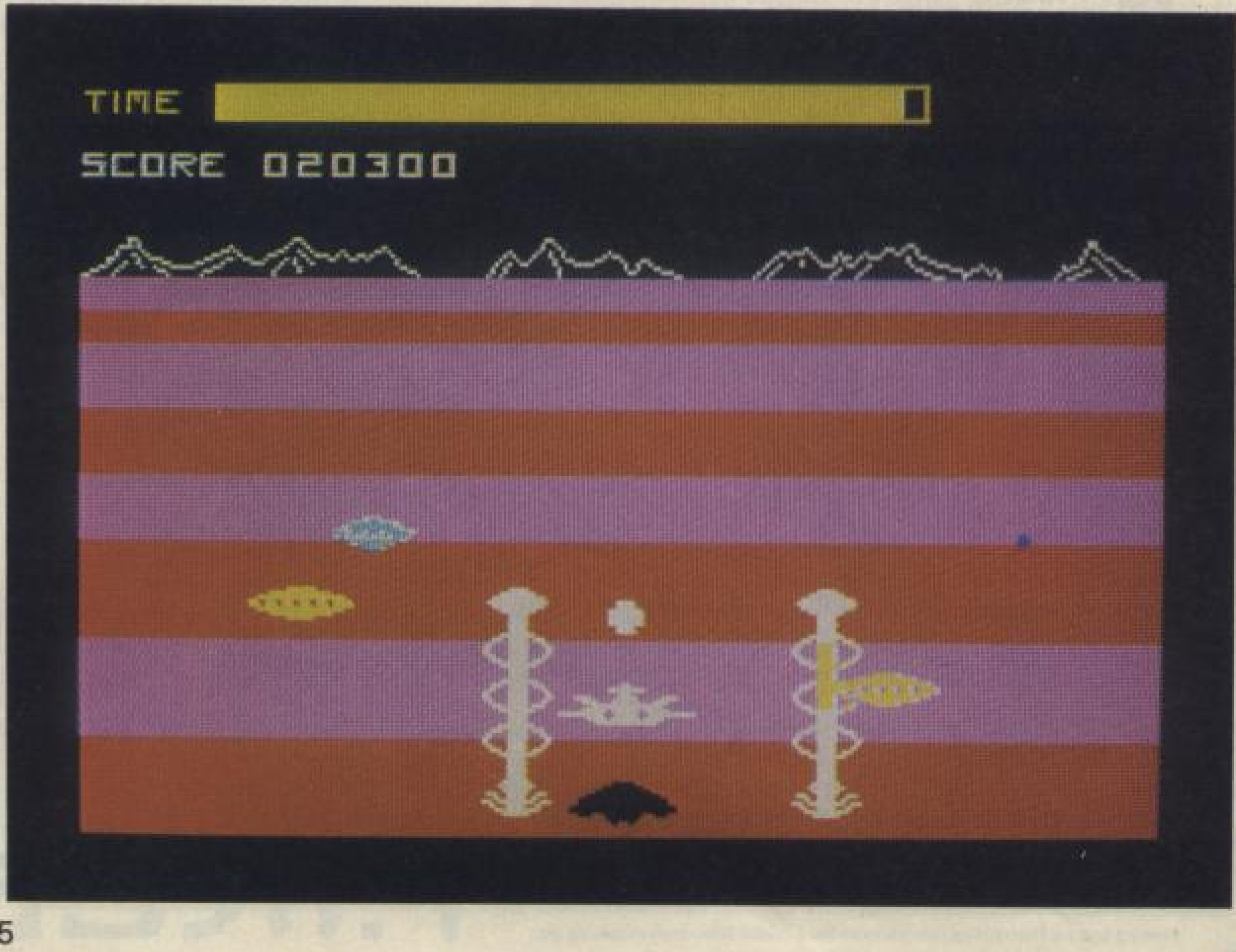
BUCK ROGERS

Producer: US Gold
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**

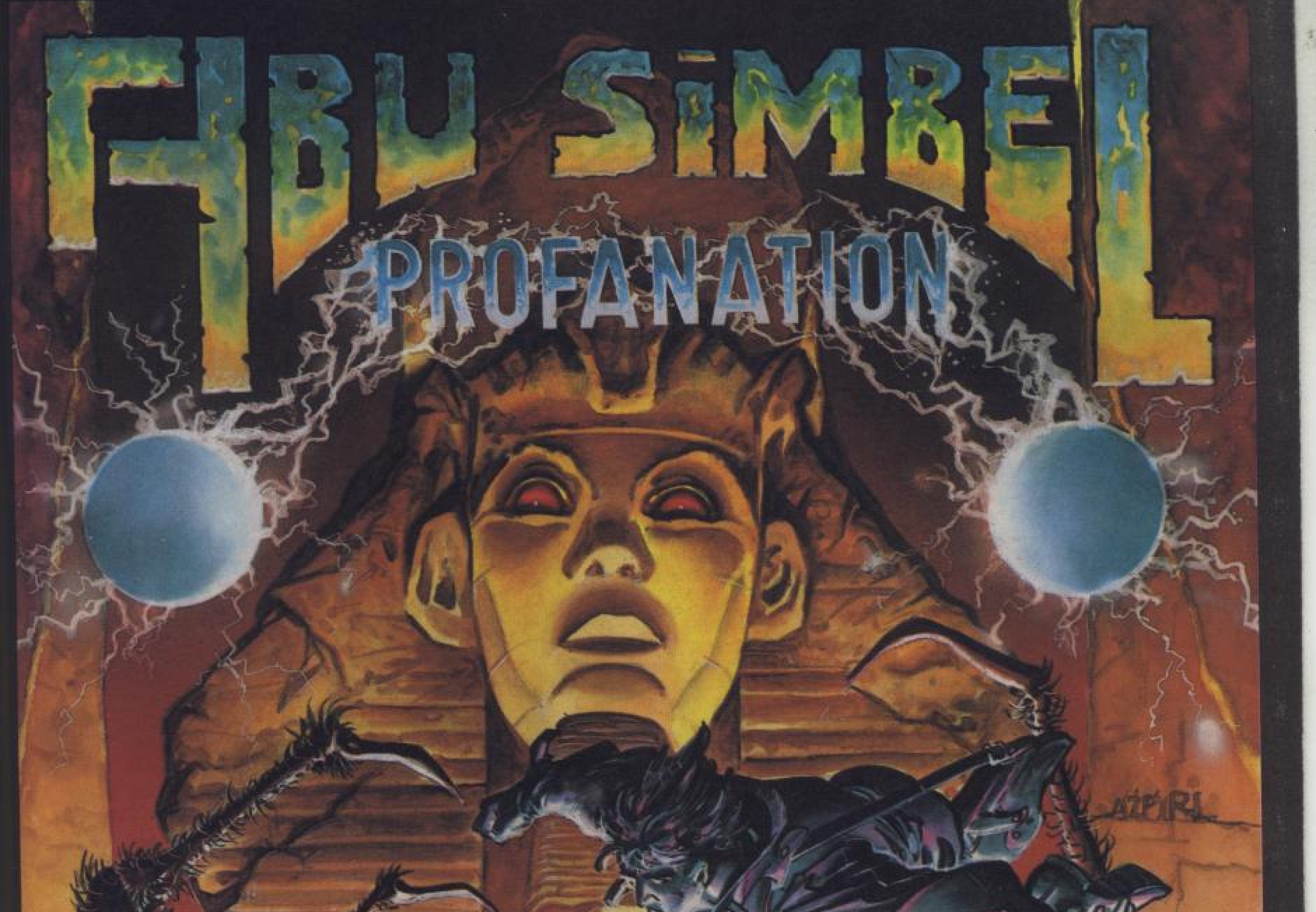
Our hero Buck has, up till now been forced to fight his way off the planet of Zoom from within the confines of the CBM64. Now that's all changed. Buck is ready to grace Spectrum fed screens. *Buck Rogers and The Planet Of Zoom*, to give it its full title is a pretty straightforward shoot 'em up. The game is divided — according to the insert — into 5 levels of 5 battles. The first three battles are fought across the planet's surface, the flat part of which resembles the freshly cut grass at Twickenham, except that the horizontal stripes flash from one lurid colour to another giving the impression of forward movement. Your ship sits in the lower half of the screen and is able to move left or right and, to give the effect of changing altitude, a little way up and down.

The electron posts are a hazard common to the first three

Flying over a gaudily coloured Twickenham-type terrain, its go for the posts, but avoid a touch. Zoom, Zoom with Buck Rogers.



126



Johnny Jones, modern day hero and explorer extraordinaire, has finally discovered the lost Temple of Abu Simbel, built by the great Pharaoh Ramses II over 3000 years ago.
In frenzied desperation he enters this secret world and is drawn into a frightening adventure, threatened by the Pharaoh's curse, in constant danger until he can reach the inner mortuary chamber.







SPECTRUM 48K £7.95

Gremlin Graphics

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battles. They look a little like rugby posts without the cross-bar but with wire hoops around each. The first battle has only electron posts looming out from the distance. Ten little triangles at the top of the screen tell you how many posts must be negotiated before you can reach the next screen. Round two requires the removal of sixteen triangles but this time, enemy ships count as well as the posts. Two types of craft can be destroyed: wierd, sproingy Space Hoppers and Saucers. Destroying each loses you one little triangle and gets you 400 points. For the maximum points, try and fly through all of the posts because they are worth 500 points a time and with good reason. The third battle is pretty much the same but this time without the hoppers — so more saucers. These guys are unpleasant simply because they have a nasty habit of coming at you from behind as well as from the front. If you clear the eighteen triangles you move off into space where you must destroy a wave of 20 saucers, again a lot of the little creeps are sneaking up from behind. Your final task is to destroy the mother ship, a pretty monstrous thing that must be hit dead centre. Not so easy while it keeps firing nasty little missiles at your ship.

Now that you have managed to destroy the first mother ship you will be awarded an extra life to help you on your way through the next four levels. While you are avoiding fatal collisions with posts and aliens you must bear in mind that each one of your 'lives' has a limited fuel supply. No matter how well you fly, sooner or later your ship will drop out of the sky — so be aggressive and keep an eye on the fuel bar at the top of the screen. The Planet of Zoom is depending on you.

CRITICISM

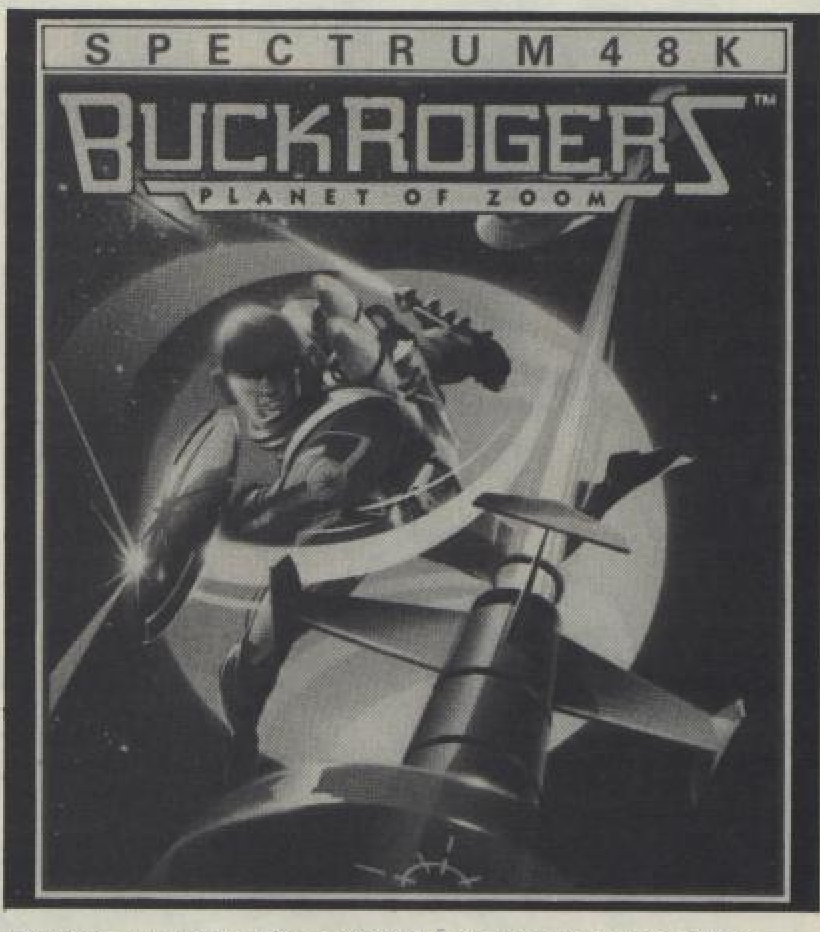
● **'This really is a pretty easy game to play. I managed to score 220,000 after only a few goes, though I admit getting the maximum score by flying through ALL of the posts is hard. Very soon you realise that every level — there are in fact at least six, not five as the leaflet says — are all the same. The enemy appear in exactly the same pattern each time, and pretty soon you can line yourself up for a kill before the target appears. The vivid colours used for the display can get painful after a while. I didn't understand why the fuel bar was labled 'time', that doesn't make much sense. The insert that came with the game was not only inaccurate but contained some pretty stupid sentences eg. 'If you fly out side the Electron posts after level one, you are likely to be hit by Electron posts.' The leaflet also claimed that the game became harder with each level; not true. That aside it's not such a bad a game if you take it for what it is; an easy though playable shoot 'em up.'**

● *'Buck Rogers is the sort of game that will be played for scores only, a little like the early arcade games. The graphics are bright and neat but nothing very special and do tend to flicker a bit. The game is playable but not really addictive and I found the Mother Ship to be something of an anti-climax'*

● 'Who remembers *Blade Alley* by PSS? I did a CRASH back on it in issue 15. Well this is essentially the same game, all US Gold have done is to get rid of a few screens and change the graphics a bit. The shadow underneath your ship is a nice touch except that it does not change size when the ship moves up and down. Another point which I found strange was the time limit which is referred to in the insert as 'fuel' On the whole the game is very easy, so it presents no challenge and, as we all know, a game without a challenge is neither addictive nor playable. I really think that US Gold are scraping the barrel a bit with this one. To the best of my arcade playing knowledge 'Buck Rogers' was always the empty machine that nobody seemed to want to play.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q to P and Y to T left/right, 1 to 0 and A to L up/down, Z to M to fire.

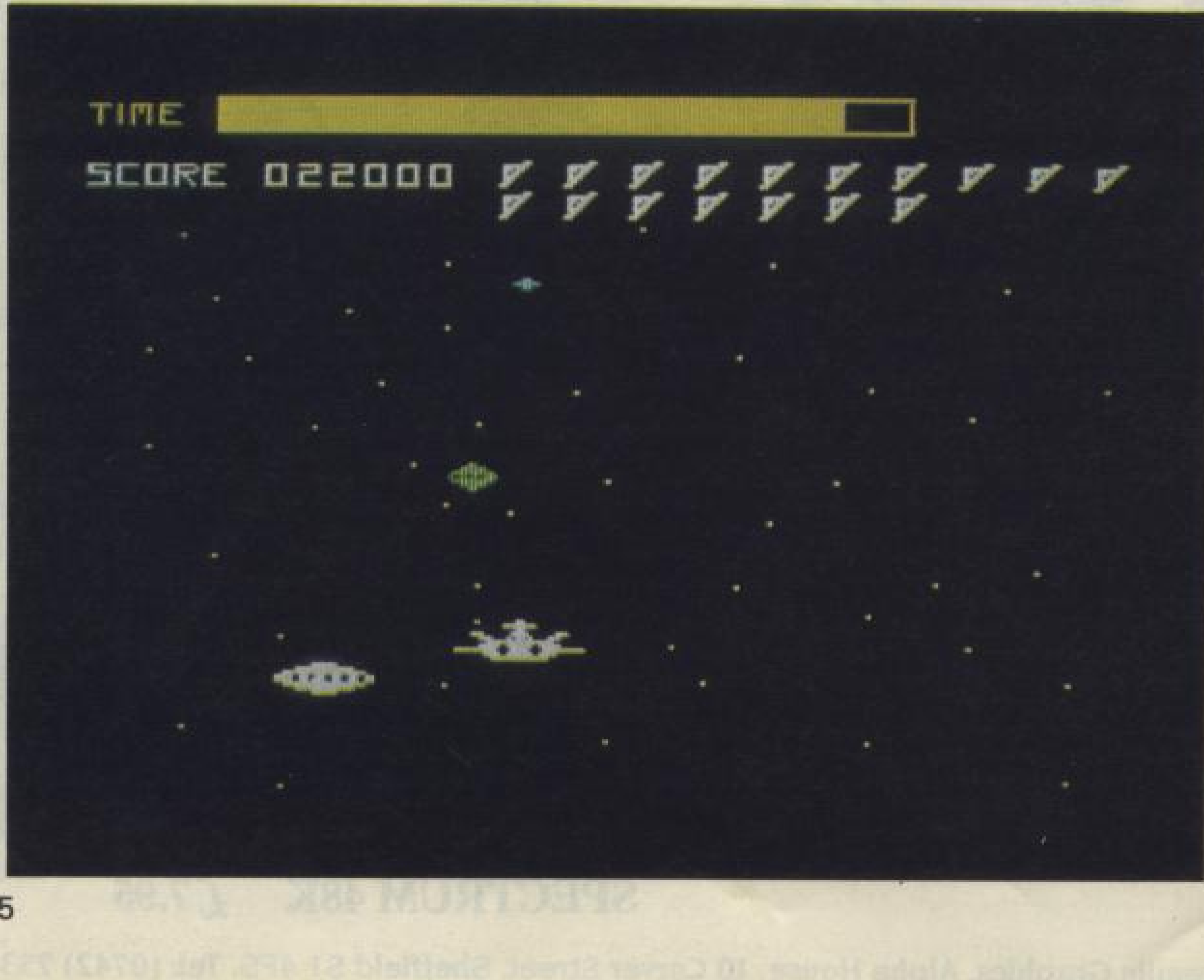


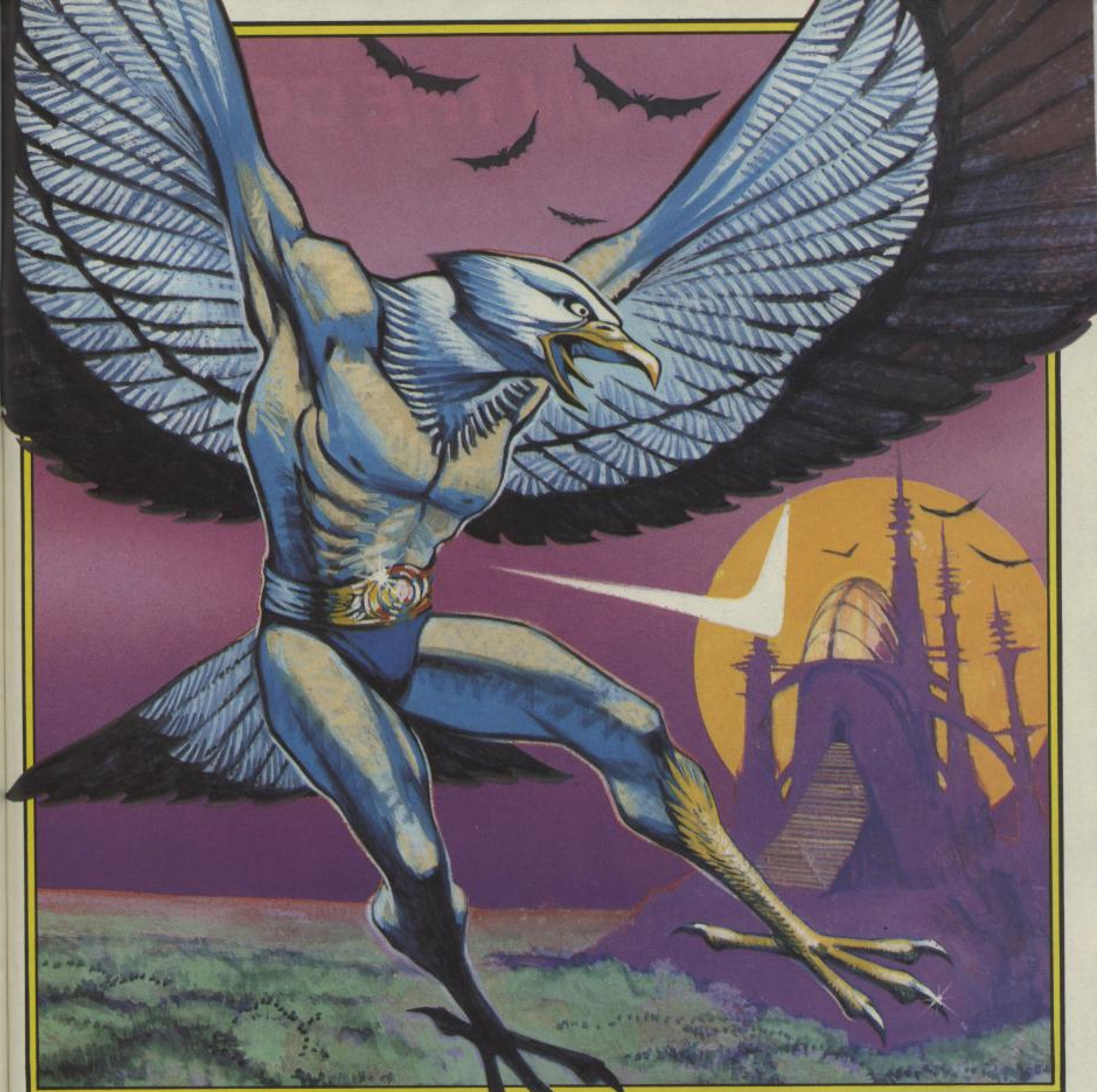
Joystick: cursor type, Kempston and Interface II
Keyboard play: very good
Use of colour: a bit too vivid at times
Graphics: neat but not outstanding
Sound: good fire sound but little else
Skill levels: 6
Lives: 4 plus extra given
Screens: five

General rating: neat but too easy for the experienced

Use of computer	**80%**
Graphics	**75%**
Playability	**82%**
Getting started	**78%**
Addictive qualities	**65%**
Value for money	**66%**
Overall	**67%**

Out in space amongst the twinkling stars, blast the saucers and watch out for the Mean Mother Ship.





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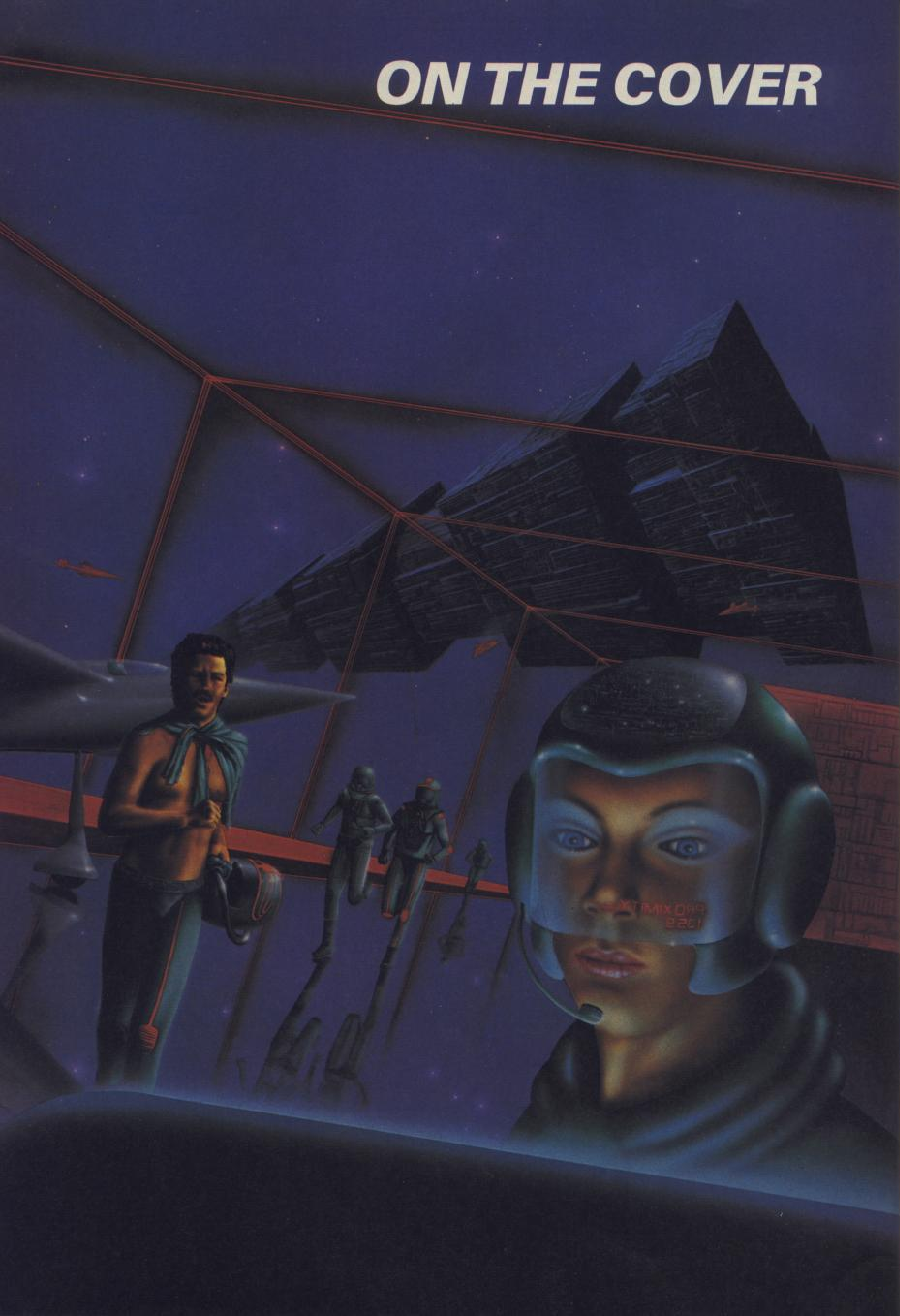
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METABOLIS

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ON THE COVER



Book covers, magazine covers, cassette inlays, advertising posters . . . they're all grist to Stuart Hughes' artistic mill. He's been involved with the home computer industry since the early eighties, when he regularly provided cover artwork for Popular Computing Weekly, back in the days when it had a full colour cover. As a result of his magazine work, software companies began 'phoning him up, offering commissions. . . .



Following a Graphic Design course at Norwich School of Art, Stuart Hughes took a job in his home town of Liverpool, teaching art in a junior school. Within a year he'd worked out that teaching was not what he wanted to do, and in 1975 he moved to London to take up the craft of Illustrator.

Stuart's first love has always been Science Fiction and Fantasy, and he produced samples of his surreal work and trotted round showing them to people. 'Very good', they'd say, 'but we need a picture of a tank . . . or a picture of two young lovers gazing into the sunset'. Drawings for such magazines as **Hi!** and **Fab 208** helped pay the bills, but Stuart didn't fancy illustrating slushy stories for women's and teen magazines for ever.

He took a part time teaching job, and concentrated on getting together a portfolio of Science Fiction/Fantasy paintings. After a couple of years, he started doing Sci-Fi book covers for **Pan** and **Futura**, and his agent secured some very well-paid work for him — remember the advert for No6 cigarettes . . . the two hot air balloons? Artist: Stuart Hughes.

'After a while, that sort of work, although lucrative, became a bit boring', Stuart explained, 'and I was ready for a change'. And so Stuart Hughes scampered off to San Francisco, where he got work in a shop which sold cowboy hats and boots. Soon he was offered a job in a camera shop, which was owned by the same company. 'Being British in San Francisco is a definite advantage', Stuart explained, 'the locals tend to work for money rather than to further their career, and if they fancy a day off, lounging on the beach, they simply take it. They tend to get a job in order to raise cash so they can go off and do something, and once they've amassed enough money they're off. I had the conventional nine-to-five British attitude, and the management loved that. Two weeks after I started work in the camera shop, I was made manager!'

After six months in the sun, and with a budding career in retail management in front of him, Stuart decided to come home and carry on with illustration. And walked straight into the recession. Undeterred, he began doing Popular Computing Weekly covers, with another artist, Ian Craig, and soon software houses started ringing him up and offering work. 'It was incredible — in 1981, at last people were asking me to do what I love doing . . .'

Tim Langdell of **Softek** (now **The Edge**) was one of the first people to commission Stuart, and has become a regular customer. More recently, Stuart has done the illustration for The Edge's new game *Fairlight* and the graphics package *The Artist* (look for the adverts!). **Artic** and **CCS**, as well as **Interface Books**, **Addison Wesley** and **Sunshine Publications** all commissioned paintings from Stuart.

'A couple of years ago, software houses were asking me to do all the design work for inlays as well as illustrations, and I thought about hiring designers and setting up in business. Then I realised that if I did, I would become a manager and it would have detracted from painting. I gave up the idea, as I realised that illustrating was more important to me'.

Nowadays the computer book side of Stuart's work has slowed down a bit, and he's beginning to work for Sci-Fi books again. 'It pays more, but I find the work a bit more restrictive — I tend to get a tighter brief. I'm happiest when I've got two weeks to complete a painting and can do pretty much what I want. However, the people who let me do that tend not to be able to afford much . . .'.

Stuart usually works in acrylics, using an airbrush, and sometimes works in oils — but an oil painting takes a couple of days to dry and there usually isn't time for such luxury. Clients tend to want finished artwork in ten days, and Stuart likes to take a couple of weeks. 'I prefer to spend a week working on the rough and sorting out the referencing and then another week







on the painting itself. I can work in parallel on a couple of paintings, producing a finished picture every week . . . and my record is seven illustrations in ten days. That marathon was very rewarding financially, but it took a lot out of me'.

'My main interest lies in drawing people — so few artists can paint people well. If you try to make up a figure, it's very hard to prevent the finished painting looking like the person was made up. I take a lot of photographs of people, which I work from — for instance for a helmeted pilot, I took photos of a friend wearing a motorbike helmet, which I used as the basis for my painting, adding details to make the whole thing look futuristic. If there's a lot of perspective work to be done, I have a friend who is an expert in Technical Drawing and I collaborate with him. He will draw out the perspective for me — he understands perspective much better than I do and takes a couple of hours to produce an accurate drawing whereas I could easily spend several days producing a less accurate piece of work'.

'Every painting is a challenge; I almost work myself up into a state referencing it and then become hyperactive while I'm actually painting it. Once it's complete, I need a couple of days to recover.'

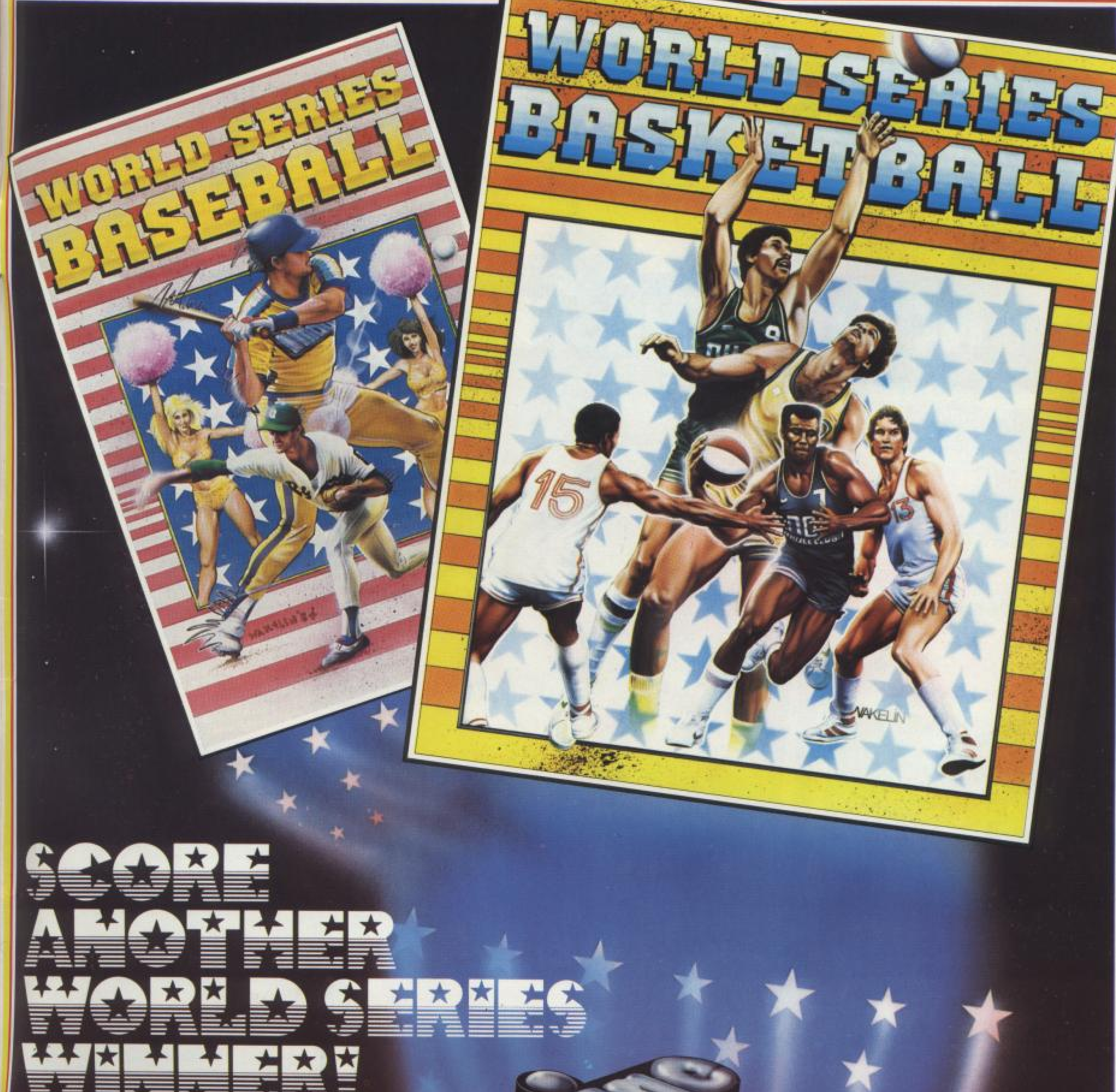
Stuart has never really got involved in computer graphics: 'After a couple of hours at the computer, I tend to get bored. I find it's much better to produce a piece of finished artwork for a loading screen, say, and then let a programmer put it onto the screen. When you work with a programmer, or directly with the computer, the finished image suffers because you start off with restrictions'.

While Stuart Hughes could always go back to what could have been a very promising career in American Retail Management, it would be an evident waste of his talents. What would he like to go forward to? 'One of my main aims in life is to work on a Ridley Scott movie, such as **Dune**. Ever since I saw **Blade Runner** I've admired the man's work, and have been totally influenced by the imagery in the film'.

Are you reading this, Ridley? Get in touch with the man, eh?



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